■ METRO/A17
Copper wire thieves strike again in Muntinlupa

■ SPORTS/A19
Morales camp: Pacquiao can't win as 'he uses what he learned from his mistakes'

■ NEWS/A2
No plans to take over Meralco, says energy secretary

■ BUSINESS/B3
SMC beer sales up in China; revenue up by 21% in 2005

Mike A lobby one reason Marcelo quit, says Salonga

By Fe Zamora

FIRST GENTLEMAN JOSE MIGUEL ARROYO had "approached" former Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo over the fate of certain cases filed at the Office of the Ombudsman, former Senate President Jovito Salonga said yesterday.

The effort is allegedly exerted by the Presi-

MIKE A, A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, January 19, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 42 P18 www.inq7.net

For 7 months, FBI clueless on Fil-Am spy, says report

WASHINGTON—BY THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN account, FBI analyst Leandro Aragoncillo was spying in plain sight. He rummaged through FBI computers for intelligence reports unrelated to his work and then e-mailed the classified documents to Filipino opposition leaders. (See Page A8.)

Aragoncillo had traveled more than a dozen times to the Philippines on personal business since 2000.

FOR 7 MONTHS, A8

Army knew of escape plan

Hero's burial today for Fil-Am killed in Iraq

PAMBANGA, BORON—MANY OF the residents of this tiny fishing and farming village had never heard of Iraq until the body of US Army Sgt. Melo Maravilloza was flown home last week. (Photos on Page A2.)

Now everyone is talking about the war and the local girl who wanted to be a nun but joined the US Army instead, only to be killed by Iraqi insurgents on Christmas Eve.

Today, she will be buried in the local Catholic cemetery here with full military honors—another name on the growing US honor role of men and women killed in Iraq.

The body of Maravilloza, who emigrated to join her mother in Hawaii in 1997 when she was 16, was flown here last week in a steel gray casket draped with the US flag.

Lt. Col. Jacquelin Lyons, a spokesperson for the Joint US Military Advisory Group in Manila, said Maravilloza's body would be paraded from the town church with a full US military honor guard.

"She's a national hero. She gave her life for her (adopted) country," Lyons said.

Maravilloza is the second Filipino-American soldier to have been killed in Iraq.

Her make in the modest family home accessible by a muddy unpaved path has drawn hundreds of townsfolk and relatives. They all nightly stories of the girl who wanted to be a nun but ended up fighting a war.

Brig. Gen. Gregory Schumacher, commander of the Army reserve

HERO'S, A2

RED ALERT: Checkpoints are posted inside Fort Bonifacio following the escape Tuesday night of the Magdalo 4 whose photos are also put up. The military has asked the help of the men on the street to help in their manhunt for the mutineers of Oakwood.

Army chief blames lawyer of mutineers

By Dona Pazzibugan, Tarra Quismundo and Christine O. Avendaño

IT'S A CASE OF BEING forewarned but not being forearmed, if the military is to be believed.

Four Army junior officers who took part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny pulled off their escape from a high-security detention center in Fort Bonifacio on Tuesday night although the Army officials supposedly knew of their plan.

Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and 1st Lieutenants Lawrence San Juan, Sonny Santiaguin and Patricio Bontuyan Jr. escaped several hours after they attended a hearing at a Makati Regional Trial Court.

Exactly how the four escaped remained a mystery. At 6 a.m. yesterday, 11 hours after the discovery of the escape, Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. told reporters the military had known about the plan to break loose and had tried to preempt it.

Esperon said he ordered the transfer of the four mutineers from the Custodial Management Unit (CMU) to a nearby building on Tuesday afternoon to prevent them from escaping.

"They were supposed to be transferred but there was a discussion with the lawyer. There was a delay and so they had an opportunity to escape," Esperon told reporters.

Esperon said defense lawyer

ARMY, A2

Magdalo lawyer, senators don't buy story

By Dona Pazzibugan, Philip C. Tubeza and Nelson F. Flores

LAWYER ROEL PULIDO IS NOT buying the Army's story that four more Oakwood mutineers have escaped from military custody.

At least not yet.

"Until one of them calls me, I'm open to both possibilities," said Pulido, referring to the other probability that the Army was hiding his clients.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense, also raised questions about the whereabouts of the four junior officers.

"Did they escape? Where they allowed to escape? Are they being hidden? And the 4th one that I heard this morning, nilipat ba (where they killed)? If they were allowed to escape by certain elements, does this indicate that the sympathy to the Magdalo's cause is widespread?" Biazon said.

"If they escaped, in the face of the fact that there was supposed to be an intelligence report that they were going to escape, this is not a failure of intelligence, [but]

MAGDALO, A2

THE MORNING before the escape, Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza was in court.

GOWN in red, white, blue topped by a rising sun is accented with chains. Students from different schools joined the fashion show at UP

GMA foes take to the catwalk

By DJ Yap

FROM THE DUST AND GRIME of street demonstrations to the glitter and glamour of the catwalk, the movement to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo has taken a new—and fabulous—turn.

Youth leaders on Tuesday night hit the ramp alongside professional models in a fashion show with a political statement: "Gown-Over Gloria."

The show was held at the Bulwagang Alumni at the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

GMA FOES, A6

Angry lawmakers in Senate, House move to terminate VFA

By Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION calling for the termination of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement is ready, and is expected to be approved today by the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA (Lovfa), lawmakers said yesterday.

The two-page resolution calls for the termination of the VFA and its renegotiation into a Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa) that would allow Philippine custody of US nationals charged with crimes in local courts.

The resolution read: "It appears that the US government has failed to properly take into account the high level of sensitivity with which the Filipino public views the custody of US servicemen on Philippine territory accused of crimes such as rape.

"Now, therefore, be it hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines, the House of Representatives concurring, to express the sense that notice of termination of the VFA should be issued, in order to pave the way for [the] renegotiation into a Sofa, with provisions on local custody similar to those of the Sofa with Japan and Korea."

The Japan-US agreement allows Japan to take custody of American servicemen facing criminal charges in court. South

ANGRY, A6

RP, US diplomats disagree over interpretation of 4 words in VFA

By Volt Contreras

A MERE FOUR WORDS IN THE RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement spelled a "difference of opinion" between Filipino and American diplomats who deliberated on the Philippine government's request for custody of the four US Marines charged with raping a Filipino woman last Nov. 1.

The disagreement stemmed from whether the VFA provision granting US authorities custody of the accused "if they so request" was fully complied with, according to Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuncion.

"We pointed out that there should have been a formal written request first, while their (the Americans') view was that it need not be formal," Asuncion disclosed yesterday at a briefing when pressed for details on how the negotiation went.

"There was a difference of opinion," he said.

According to earlier reports quoting the US Embassy's Matthew Lussenhop, Americans authorities made a "verbal request" to empower Philippine officials on the night the four servicemen were arrested at the Subic Bay free port.

Reached yesterday, Lussenhop maintained: "That evening, there were a number of officials from

RP-US, A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY: Cooler in Luzon and Visayas as the flow of northeast winds from the mainland China will increase. Partly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers are expected over the rest of the country. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

Source: PAGASA

Second FRONTPAGE

No plans to take over Meralco

Energy chief says gov't not even considering it

By Abigail L. Ho and Alexis Pays

ENERGY SECRETARY RAPHAEL LOTILLA YESterday reiterated that the government was not taking over the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. and indeed was not even considering such a move.

The government would much rather focus its attention on encouraging world oil prices to this land a huge relief to the public, Lotilla said in a statement.

He warned that oil prices have reached their highest levels in the past three months.

Lotilla said the Department of Energy was too busy thinking of ways to mitigate the impact of rising world prices on domestic fuel and electricity prices to bother with a "non-existent plan" for a Meralco takeover.

"We continue to pursue the principle of securing a fair deal for electricity consumers and for the government, and advancing transparency and competition in the electricity industry," Lotilla said.

P42-B debt

During Malacañang sources, the Inquirer last month reported that a takeover of the distribution utility was one of the options that a top official had presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo to settle a long-standing dispute between Meralco and Meralco concerning a P42-billion debt that Meralco owed the state-owned National Power Corp.

According to DOE data, the regional benchmark Dubai crude oil price soared to a January average of $57.34 a barrel, from only $53.30 a month ago.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products traded at $63.98 in the first 17 days of January, almost $5 higher than the December average of $60.81 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel also jumped to an average of $71.84 a barrel in the Jan. 1 to Jan. 17 period, from the $67.03 a barrel average last month.

Lotilla said the DOE was particularly concerned about the crisis over Iran's nuclear program as Tehran supplied 14.5 percent of the country's crude requirements.

Iran is the Philippines' second biggest source of crude, next only to Saudi Arabia, which supplies 36.3 percent of the country's crude supply.

No to settlement

Consumer groups yesterday contested demands for the Energy Regulatory Commission to craft a settlement agreement between Meralco and the Napocor over erasing the P42-billion debt, saying it would lead to an increase in the electricity bills of Meralco's four million customers.

The National Association of Electricity Consumers (Nasecore) and the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) said the agreement would allow Meralco to pass on to consumers P20.8 billion of the debt it owed Napocor.

They said this would result in monthly electricity consumer bills increasing by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour for the next five to six years.

Meralco had announced in May the electricity that it distributor from Napocor but has been refusing to purchase, preferring to source its power from the Lopez family-owned power producer.

MAMA'S HERO

Evelita Maruhilcos (third from left), along with other relatives, views the US flag-draped casket of her daughter, Filipino-born Lt. Army Sgt. Myla Maruhilcos, in Indianapolis, Behind whom she will be buried today. Sgt. Maruhilcos (shown at inset with an unidentified Iraqi child two days before she died was killed in Iraq in an ambush by Iraqi insurgents on Christmas Eve. AFP

CBCP replaces secgen, spokesperson

By Christine V. Esguerra

THE INFLUENTIAL CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) is replacing its secretary general and spokesperson more than a week before its all-important plenary assembly later this month.

CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo yesterday announced the departure of Msgr. Hernando Coronel, who has been CBCP's secretary general and spokesperson since 2001.

In a brief statement, the Jaro, Iloilo prelate said Coronel was being given a new assignment by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

The CBCP media office said Lagdameo learned about the request through a letter sent to him by Rosales Friday evening.

"Yes, it is true that Msgr. Coronel, a priest to be ordained as Bishop, Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, who is giving him a new assignment," Lagdameo said.

But last Friday, Soren Ilaya, head of the media office, told the Inquirer that Coronel's reported departure was "definitely not a promotion."

"The CBCP president has no knowledge of such move, so how can we expect him to issue a statement based on a rumor?" she said in a text message. "Why release a piece of news that's not true only to retract it the following day?"

Lagdameo yesterday didn't say what assignment Coronel would be given by Rosales or who his replacement would be. Coronel is an ordained CBCP official whose term expires in 2007.

There was talk within the CBCP that he would be replaced in an outing separate by Fr. Jerome Figuera, his current assistant and a known protégé of Lagdameo, until the next election.

But the bypass has learned from two independent sources, both Church insiders privy to the issue, that there was more to the departure of Coronel than simply sending him away after serving the CBCP for 10 years.

One of them described his transfer as a euphemism for humiliating this soft-spoken Coronel.

"We couldn't say that [the] real reason because he's ordained," he explained. "A priest can't sound be terrible him, no other job and hope that he accepts it."

Coronel himself refused to comment on his departure.

In a telephone interview with the Inquirer on Friday, he said: "I don't know the will of God. I will miss you guys. I will trust you, continue."

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No cheating in Cebu, Noli's lawyer insists

THE ELECTION LAWYER OF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro insisted yesterday that there was no cheating in the 2004 elections in Cebu province, denying allegations by Senate senators Loren Legarda that 90 percent of the ballots from two other Senate seats found to be spurious by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

Legarda, the defeated opposition vice presidential candidate in the 2004 elections, has a pending electoral protest against De Castro at the PET.

"The results of the actual count of the ballots for Legarda and De Castro from the cities of Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu (shelved) in the results as reflected in the election returns and not, by boards. There was no sign of any tampering of the results of the ballot count as well as the election returns," the senator said in a radio broadcast.

Mandaue, who spoke before the Rotary Club of Pasay City yesterday, added why Legarda did not object to or question the authenticity and due execution of the election returns in said fully boards if it was indeed true that 90 percent of the ballots were spurious.

"Mr. Legarda is now stopped from questioning the results of the election returns therefore because of her failure to object to the returns," the lawyer said.

"The fact that the count of the ballots tallied with the results shown in the returns which were not objected or contested by any party is a clear manifestation that the election in Cebu was done and honest thereby confirming that the true ballots for Castro over their respective votes were cast for them honestly and cannot be taken away from them," Mandaue said.

With a report from Cynthia Balana

SC junks suit vs NorthRail

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ONCE MORE THROWN OUT a petition filed by opponents in Bulacan questioning the constitutionality of the of the multibillion-peso Northrail Project running through the province.

In a single-page resolution released yesterday, the high court dismissed with finality the motion for reconsideration filed by the Bulacan chapter of the League of Urban Doctor for Action (Lupa), saying the petitioners failed to show new arguments that would overturn a reversal of its power.

The high court ruled that the petitioners "have not pointed out, and no substantial arguments were presented, to warrant the reversal of the questioned resolution." The court said in its latest ruling.

Armand Nocum

Bottled H_2O now part of US arsenal vs terror

By Jake S. Alipala
INQUIRER BUREAU

ZAMBOANGA CITY — 10 troops in Windsor and Tabuk have started to use bottled water to smother bad in their anti-terror campaign aimed at cramping up the Abu Sayyaf.

The bottled water even came with an official endorser: 10 Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones.

At a press conference held at the Embassy Command here on Tuesday, US Embassy personnel and American military officials distributed samples of the cute antiterror instrument to local media practitioners in the hope of softening the hearts of hostile-looking members of the Abu Sayyaf.

The label on the product, which comes in 12 oz plastic bottles, bears photos of the most-wanted Abu Sayyaf leaders — Khadaffy Janjalani and Abdul Aziz Mihadjil, alias Dr. Solaiman — with corresponding rewards of up to $5 million for their capture.

Also printed on the label are the words "Wanted for murder, extortion and kidnapping" and hotline numbers that information could use to contact the appropriate agencies.

"It looks promising but I guess it would only be effective if it passes by thirsty," said Rondo Calonia, Western Mindanao State prosecutor.

Col. Domingo Tutan Jr., Southcom's chief of staff, said the distribution of the bottled water in seven villages till troops have been conducting civic action was aimed at increasing the people's vigilance against terrorism.

Sandigan to set deadline for Erap lawyers

By Nikko U. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN said yesterday it would give former President Joseph Estrada's lawyers a deadline within which to complete their presentation of defense evidence after opposed complaints by the prosecution that the deposed leader's attorneys were dragging out the five-year-old trial on plunder and perjury charges.

Justice Teresita de Castro, presiding judge of the Sandiganbayan's Special Division, made the declaration in open court during yesterday's hearing, saying she would provide specific details of the deadline next week.

No witnesses were presented at yesterday's hearing and Dr Castro decided to cancel a scheduled hearing next Monday as no defense witness was scheduled to be presented on that day. However, a hearing was set on Wednesday.

Dr Castro's decision to set a deadline was in response to a motion presented by prosecutors Dan Generoso asking the court to streamline the hearings and consider the case submitted for resolution.

The prosecution argued that even if the trial were to be terminated next month, Estrada and his lawyers could not claim denial of due process as they have had at least three years to prepare and present their case. The prosecution presented defied witness and rested its case in April 2005.

"The process has been very and long and protracted," the prosecution motion said.

Former Manila City Prosecutor Jose Flaminiano, a member of Estrada's legal defense team, disputed the prosecution's charge that the defense was dragging out the trial. He told the court that the delays were "reasonable, not capricious and oppressive."

Flaminiano said the defense had been diligent in presenting witnesses, pointing out it had placed more than 80 witnesses on the stand. He said the relevance and materiality of the witnesses' testimony were for the court – not the prosecution – to appreciate.

Flaminiano and defense lawyers still had a number of witnesses to present, including Estrada himself, but were waiting for the court to rule on several motions filed by witnesses who refused to testify on Estrada's behalf and had asked the court to quash subpoenas it had issued requiring them to appear.

Flaminiano said it was the right of an accused to be heard and to use every available means to prove his innocence, especially in a capital offense such as plunder where the penalty is death.

MIAA stands firm on $5 security fee

By Nikko Dizon

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Authority (MIAA) yesterday vowed firm on its plan to impose a $5 (P260) security fee on departing passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), following an opinion by the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) that it is the government's responsibility to shoulder expenses for security enhancements at international airports.

A third public hearing on the new fee has been scheduled for next week, Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the MIAA, told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

"I don't know why IATA understates our effort in financing the security needs in Philippine airports," Cusi said.

Cusi said that the MIAA has long been "carrying the burden" of spending for the security needs of the NAIA terminals.

"But now it has become very expensive. We have to acquire new machines. Even the (search-sniffing) dogs are already very expensive," Cusi said.

Cusi noted that IATA did not oppose the imposition of the security fee on passengers in other countries such as the United States, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

"I think (regarding IATA's) not strict," Cusi said of the IATA opinion.

The Inquirer reported on Wednesday that IATA, the trade association representing the international airline industry, has said in a Oct. number opinion that the state, referring to the Philippine government, and not the flying public should shoulder the cost of security enhancements at international airports.

Cuenca loses Negros hacienda

By Marvin S. Rivera

THE LAST LEGAL OBSTACLE TO THE BIDDED relocation of one of the biggest sugar estates in Negros Occidental has been eliminated after a land court relocated the title of the hacienda to its former beneficiaries.

Judge Reynaldo Alon of the La Carlota regional trial court branch 63 reversed his earlier decision canceling the certificates of land ownership award (CLOA) of the farmer beneficiaries of the Hacienda Nieto Malaga, saying a recent Supreme Court ruling that regional trial courts have no jurisdiction in such cases.

"It is then incumbent that the order issued by this court is null and void and of no force and effect," Alon said in his decision dated Dec. 13 but signed only on Jan. 17.

The reinstated CLOA covers 1.64 hectares of the 440-ha Hacienda Nieto Malaga in La Carlota City owned by Rufino Cuenca.

Cuenca has been contesting his landholding being placed under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform program since 1996, getting in the way of the farm workers being given the CLOA in the land.

In September 2004, the Supreme Court ruled with finality that trial courts have no jurisdiction over agrarian reform cases, compelling land courts to dismiss cases related to CARP.

Villamayor, 53

ALICIA CRUSMO VIL... lawyer died on Monday, Jan. 16. She was 53.

She is survived by her husband Robert L. Villamayor, children Julie-Ann, Nina Grace, Alec and grandchild Angelo.

Her body lies in 24 Mercedes St., San Carlos Heights Subdivision, Tayuman, Binondoon, Rizal.

Interment will be held on Friday at the Manlawang Kanlibo in Binondoon...

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Holcim

Celebrating Filipino Ingenuity

January 20, 2006. Holcim Philippines opens "Celebrating Filipino Ingenuity", an exhibit to pay tribute to the Filipino winners and participants in the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction.

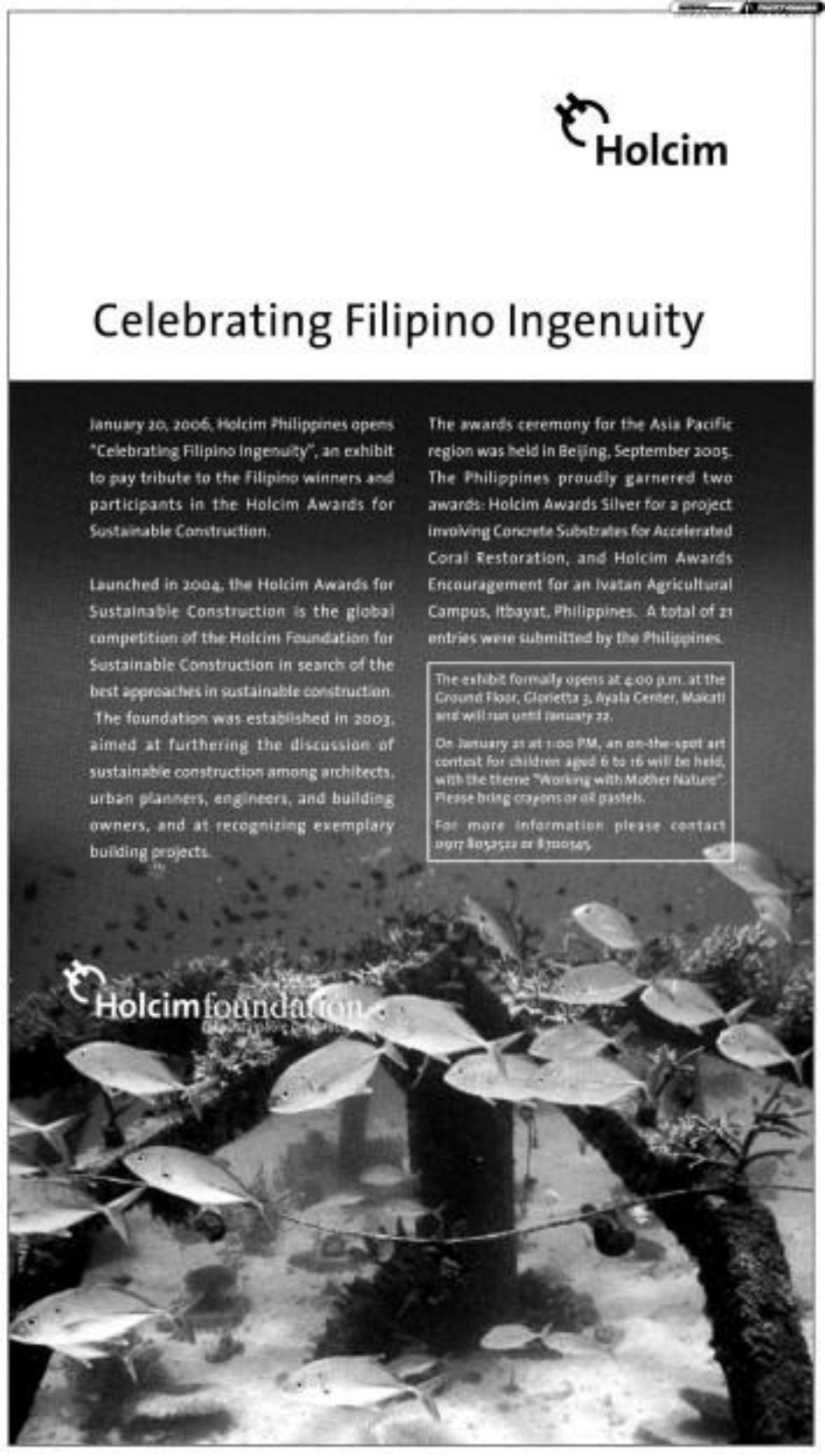
Launched in 2004, the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction is the global competition of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction in search of the best approaches in sustainable construction. The foundation was established in 2003, aimed at furthering the discussion of sustainable construction among architects, urban planners, engineers, and building owners, and at recognizing exemplary building projects.

The awards ceremony for the Asia Pacific region was held in Beijing, September 2005. The Philippines proudly garnered two awards: Holcim Awards Silver for a project involving Concrete Substrates for Accelerated Coral Restoration, and Holcim Awards Encouragement for an Ivatan Agricultural Campus, Itbayat, Philippines. A total of 21 entries were submitted by the Philippines.

The exhibit formally opens at 4:00 p.m. at the Ground Floor, Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati and will run until January 22.

On January 21 at 1:00 PM, an on-the-spot art contest for children aged 6 to 16 will be held, with the theme "Working with Mother Nature". Please bring crayons or oil pastels.

For more information please contact 0917 8053522 or 8700545.



House told: It takes two to Cha-cha

By TJ Burgonio

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CAN'T go it alone and will need the concurrence of the Senate to amend the 1987 Constitution under a constituent assembly.

The chair and members of the Constitutive Commission (ConCom) spoke separately but expressed this common view when they appeared as the Senate initial hearing on proposed modes to revise the Charter.

"I believe in the Senate and House voting separately because it makes a lot of sense that in ordinary legislation either chamber has to vote separately how much more on a very weighty matter of constitutional change?" said Dr. Jose Abueva, ConCom chair.

The commissioners shared Abueva's view, for cited different reasons.

The Senate committee on constitutional amendments opened its hearings on a House resolution convening Congress into a constituent assembly and a Senate resolution calling for a constitutional convention to study and approve changes to the Charter.

The chair, Sen. Richard Gordon, posed only one question to the resource persons: Can the House change the Constitution without the Senate?

"My own presence here speaks for itself. I believe we have a bicameral Congress and the Senate is part of the process," ConCom commissioner Jose Lovinn Jr. said.

Bato Arzobi, ConCom commissioner, argued that Congress, being bicameral, implied that "each House is separate, and it must vote on an issue independently."

Jose Villanueva, another commissioner, said that one only needed to look at the tradition of rewriting the country's Constitution to find that both chambers of Congress took part in it.

"I don't put so much importance as to whether the provision says voting separately, you look at tradition, you look at history, and you find out that in every instance where the fundamental law of the land was enacted, the two houses always voted separately," he said.

Ramon Rodriguez, another ConCom member, said that "there must be a concurrence of the Senate and a separate vote for purposes of proposing amendments to the Constitution if acting as a constituent assembly."

"We are unanimous and we believe, as a lawyer, there is no other interpretation but it should be voting separately," commissioner Anthony Acevedo said.

House position

Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, had contended the House could introduce amendments without the Senate and comply with the three-fourths vote required by the Constitution to approve an amendment.

Under a constituent assembly, an amendment has to be approved by a three-fourths vote of Congress.

Gordon said that the ConCom's unanimous view that both chambers should approve amendments to the Constitution voting separately had wrested all speculation spawned by the House position.

"What we achieved today is there's no longer the speculation that it's only the lower House which can elicit documentary evidence for the Senate," he said after the hearing.

Raul Concepcion, chair of the Economic and Industries Watch, and Commission on Elections director Mendiri Datuig also agreed with the ConCom's position.

Hero's burial . . .

From page A1

intelligence coalition command, will award Marcelinos the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and a Meritorious Service Medal for his acts to Iraq, where she was assigned in the multinational group of Polish as an intelligence interrogator.

A natural linguist, the barely five-foot lil Marcelinos had endeared herself to her colleagues with her study routine and compassion.

She was in a convoy on Christmas Eve when it ran into a hail of rocket-propelled grenades. As Iraqi forces soldiers died in the attack, according to her mother Emelina Marcelinos, citing a report by the US military.

But only her daughter's body was recognizable, a miracle the mother attributed to the Roman Catholic medallions and crosses she had worn during her time of duty.

The mother said her daughter was afraid of getting killed in Iraq but her deep sense of duty prevailed.

"Style died for a cause. They (American government) respect her and she is a real hero," the tearful mother said.

Bible, not rifle

Sr. Margaret Michael, reunion director for the daughters of Saint Paul that provided spiritual guidance to Style, said in a letter to the soldier's family: "She said that as she carried her weapon that weekend, she would exercise her self-defense with a Bible in hand, than a rifle."

Desiree Rodriguez, a Marcelinos cousin, said the clan was surprised when they learned of her service to Iraq. They knew she was afraid of dying there but she had no choice as an enlisted person.

"I think she died doing her duty. She is a person of integrity. But she was really afraid," Rodriguez said. "Maybe Style died because God did not want her to kill anyone." AFP

Mike A lobby one reason Marcelo quit, says Salonga

From page A1

dent's controversial husband: partly contributed to Marcelo's untimely resignation last November. Salonga told a forum on electoral reforms sponsored by the Black and White Movement at the Heroes Club in Makati City.

Salonga, who heads Globalbayan and former Kuramayan, said he personally asked Marcelo last year about reports that the President's husband had inquired about cases pending at the office of the Ombudsman.

"I confronted him [Marcelo] by phone and later personally. He did not deny it," Salonga said, quoting Marcelo as saying, "Kapit pa gusto ito nang mapagpa diri. Absolutely its no hang and dungyan dinsi sa Ping-cass (That's why I resign as resign. I am just waiting for the decision on the Ping case)."

Citing health reasons, Marcelo resigned last Nov. 30, about two months after filing a two-page resignation letter to the President. He said that his work had left him "physically and mentally exhausted."

Feeling pain all over

Marcelo, who was named Ombudsman in October 2002, had complained about "feeling pain all over," according to colleagues interviewed by the Inquirer. He had been suffering from ulcers and hypertension.

As Ombudsman, Marcelo was supposed to serve until 2008.

Reached by the Inquirer, former lawyer Jose Justice declined immediate comment.

Marcelo, who was with the prosecutors during President Joseph Estrada's impeachment trial in 2000, was heading a team prosecuting the deposed leader by plunder. Trailed for months, the Ombudsman was also prosecuting several officials, including several reportedly linked to the First Gentleman, who were involved in the overpriced Presidents Hundred Municipal Avenue.

Pressed to give details about the alleged meddling at the Ombudsman by the President's husband, Salonga referred to the statement by Sen. Jinggoy Estrada days after Marcelo's resignation was announced—that Marcelo was being pressured to go lightly on former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Overtaken by events

Marcelo had wanted to do justice, but he was overtaken by events," Salonga said, adding that he also believed that at the time Marcelo resigned, the Ombudsman "was really very sick."

Perez has been under investigation on charges that he extorted $2 million from former Rep. Mark Jimenez in connection with a power project involving an Iligan firm. Jimenez also claimed he gave at least P8 million to a foundation belonging to the First Couple.

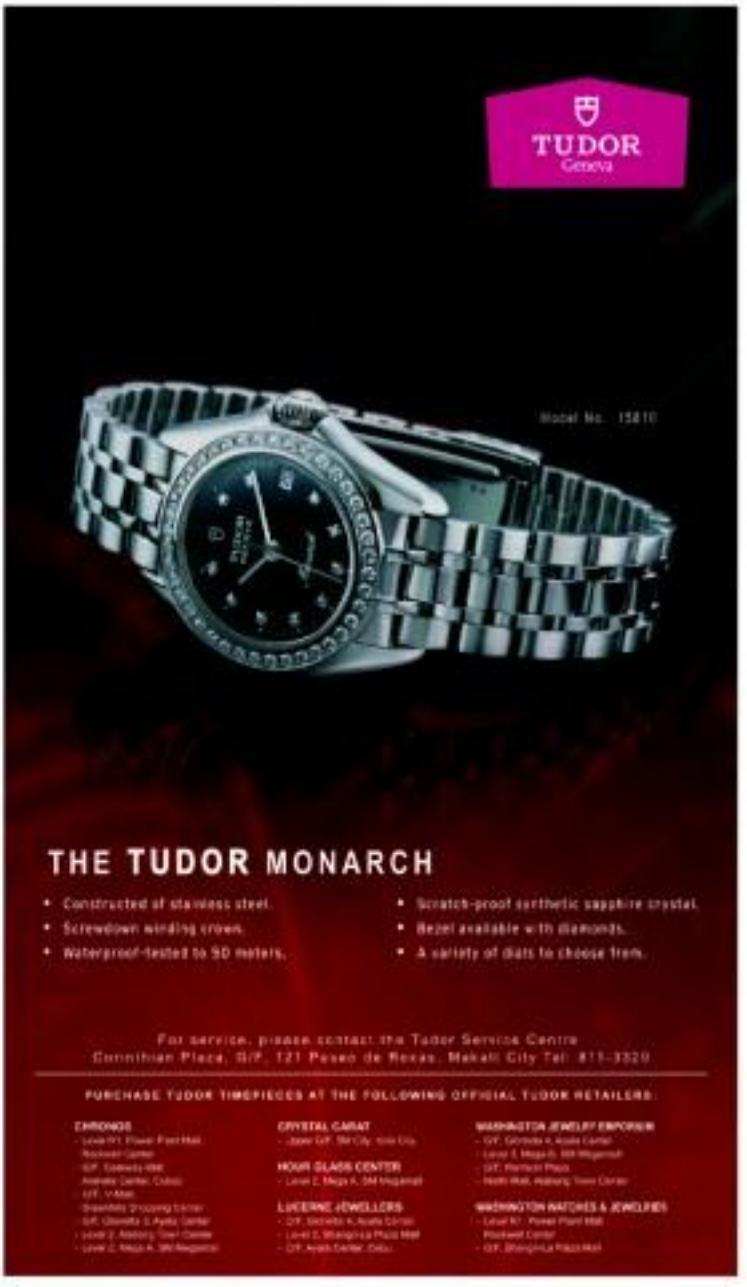
The Ombudsman is tasked to investigate corruption charges against government officials, and oversee the case for trial before the Sandiganbayan.

Hernando Perez case

Rumors about Malacañang exerting pressure on Marcelo circulated after he asked to resign last September. But Marcelo vitiated maintained he was loyal to his bosses.

Previous to Marcelo's resignation, the Inquirer also ran a story about the Department of Justice's reluctance to request the Hong Kong government to release the documents pertinent to the filing of charges against Perez.

Perez had allegedly deposited $2 million with the Credit Bank Hong Kong in February 2001. The amount was allegedly shifted from the Impex Global to Mediacorp Documentos Societal Anonimo). The Argentine firm that rehabilitated the Calaca Bataan Kalayaan (CBK) power plant complex in Laguna.



Win or lose, we will fight, says family of rape victim

By Tonette Orejas
INQ Central Luzon Desk

THE 15 ENRILES TO REFUSAL TO turn over to Philippine authorities the four lawmen involved in the April 1989 rape-torture-murder case will only urge her family never to stop seeking justice for the raped and her family to see the case through.

Vicki Belo, mother of Hubert Jason Jumat (Who in fact, we will fight)," the woman's mother told reporters after the decision was announced.

"We are aware of the real of their decision after the preliminary investigation," she said, adding that the recommendation of the lawyers' assistants was good-bye to the recommendation of the Justice League (CJL) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The mother said her family had no ill feelings toward Legarda and company.

"They really helped ensure that these American soldiers were charged in court. We have big trust in [secretary Legarda's group]," she said.

Legarda and company, meanwhile, that the CJL have pulled out of the case, stating that it cannot fully control the preliminary investigation. They said their task was done when the soldiers were charged in court.

The complainant's uncle, a priest, is looking for a private lawyer, preferably a woman, to assist the team of Champion Pen.

We have full trust in Prosecutor Jalandoni. We're pulling in our private lawyer to provide balance," the mother said.

The complainant's family, who runs a restaurant business, has not received financial or other support from the government. But the mother said the family was not saying that they needed state forms of help.

"What we want is for the government to help us win this case," she said. "This is not just about our daughter's dignity. This is a matter of sovereignty—we [refer] to [the] security of the US."

The complainant, through Legarda, said the family will not let her abusers go free, including their Filipino defense Tanseco-Enriquez.

Solidaridad, as well as two of the six original accused—Lance Corporal Albert Laus and Corporal Cesar Ruiz Jr.—have been cleared of involvement in the alleged crime.

Angry lawmakers in Senate, House move to terminate VFA

Front page A1

Enrile has forged a similar agreement with the United States.

Ejercito cannot have rapidly formed by the call on Tuesday of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for the termination of the VFA, following the refusal of the US Embassy to surrender custody of the four US Marines suspected in the raping a 22-year-old Filipina woman.

House Deputy Minority Leader Imee Marcos and other militant party-list lawmakers Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador and Liza Maza said they would back the concurrent resolution.

Drumcyo said the US Embassy's stance on the issue of custody was more flustered the United States' "arrogance as a superpower" and "the same elitist relationship between the US and Philippine governments."

Approval expected

The concurrent resolution is expected to be approved by the Senate, as both its sponsor and co-author, Senate majority leader Juan Ponce Enrile, said.

It will have to be adopted by the Senate and the House before it is forwarded to President Macapagal-Arroyo for approval.

"I don't think there will be a problem gathering a majority vote in both chambers of Congress," Senator Santiago, who co-chairs the Lawyers with Lobo Rep. Antonio Cuenco, said on Tuesday.

Cuenco, who chairs the House foreign affairs committee, yesterday said he agreed with the resolution "in principle."

"I agree with what Miriam said, but we should still pursue all diplomatic efforts. Failing that, we proceed [with the VFA's termination]," he said.

Only a review

At a briefing in Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the Arroyo Administration would have nothing to do with the VFA, and would "just review how it is—in view of the [recent] and order, take more diplomatic discussions."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that while sovereignty was "non-negotiable," it was not an "absolute" and could be waived in "certain situations" particularly in this instance.

"The jurisdiction to try this case can never be waived, but the custody may be waived. This case has not diminished our sovereignty, which is just one attribute of statehood," he said.

Gonzalez discounted the impression between the murder-linked by the Japanese and Philippine governments with the United States in trying criminal cases committed by US personnel in their respective countries.

"The heavy-the same sovereignty as Japan, but our VFAs are different. You should ask the people who negotiated and ... ratified our VFA [why they allowed the US to retain custody]," he said in reporters.

'Gravely overseas'

As early as November, Representatives Gringo Honasan and Cesario Ong of Bayan Muna filed House Resolution No. 2008 seeking the immediate termination of the VFA. Ong, they said, "trades" misses our national sovereignty and is grossly unequal for placing US interests over and above our personnel and national interests."

Honasan said HR 1008 could be "the kernel of the movement to terminate."

Maza (Gabriela), on the other hand, filed HR 1078 urging Malacañang to "uphold the dignity of Filipino women by ensuring that justice is served in [and custody] of the US soldiers.

She said US lawmakers had introduced HR 1070 for approval by the plenary.

"The approval of the resolution is urged. In light of the US government's imperative that we take measures to assert our sovereignty and show our determination to expedite justice," Maza said.

Abrogation

At a joint conference, Rep. Rodolfo Rufino Biazon (LP, Muntinlupa), vice chair of the House defense committee, assured that only the President could abrogate a treaty such as the VFA.

"It's an act of the executive. Congress or the oversight committee can only recommend," said Biazon, who added that he would be logical reason for the US refusal to relinquish custody was his "US pride."

But Rep. Jose Edgardo Angara (LDP, Aurora) said Mr. Arroyo having the last say on any treaty was "not a settled issue."

Angara, a lawyer and a law graduate of Harvard University, one that says Senate concurrence is necessary to abrogate a treaty. And since the treaty has "the force and effect of a statute [law]," Congress should pass a similar law to abrogate it, he said.

"The other view is that the President can unilaterally abrogate [a treaty]," Angara said. "The Senate can no longer unilaterally withdraw its concurrence if the President does not agree with the reconsideration of [a treaty]."

To hear the two views, Angara said, both chambers of Congress should pass a resolution urging the President to withdraw from the treaty.

That the treaty will remain only for 180 days, he said.

Diplomatic action

Administration lawmakers condemned the US position.

In a joint statement, Reps. Edcel Lagman of Albay, chair of the House committee on justice, and Rodolfo Ojy of Leyte, chair of the House committee on trade and development, said Malacañang should "consider immediate diplomatic action against the US."

"The US has refused to extend to Philippine law the same courtesy that our sovereignty, it shows that US does not trust our justice system," said its co-sibling.

They've already violated the rights of the victim," Lagman said. He should not allow them to violate our national dignity. They cannot just be like us."

Ojy said that since the rape case was filed, the Philippine government had been "too cautious ... in its dealings with any diplomatic row with the US."

Humiliating

"But the US refused to surrender the notorious known as co-defendant to prosecute the crime in the country where its humiliate our people and country," he said.

Assistant Rep. Ociney Belmonte expressed his "indignation of the highest degree" at the US Embassy refusal, he said, had been engaged in "a brazen invasion of the Philippines."

"Worse, it is our own government that is pulling the wool over our eyes," he said.

According to Beltran, there is no justice in the Department of Justice, and the Department of Foreign Affairs "treasonous, not the Philippines, but another country." With reports from Cid Cabucungan Jr.

An Appreciation For an Enduring Partnership

ARMHYN

Armhyn Resources for Management and Development, Inc. (ARMHYN), a private consulting organization, is celebrating its 25th anniversary on January 20, 2009. On this occasion, ARMHYN wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the following valuable key clients and partners for the mutually enriching experience in designing, implementing and evaluating various capacity building and development programs. ARMHYN's key services provided to clients include among others: Training, Coaching & Mentoring, Manpower Development, Systems & Procedures Development, Organizational Development, Institutional Capacity Building, Research & Evaluation, Assistance in Operationalization of Environmental Issues in Planning Exercises (PAES).

A. International Development & Funding Agencies
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- The World Bank (WB)
- US Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) – PNI Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) – Local Government Support Program (LGSP)

B. UN Offices
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

C. International Volunteer Organizations
- United States Peace Corps – Philippines (USPC-PI)
- World Vision Development Foundation (WVDF)
- Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)
- Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (SNV)
- Korean Youth Volunteers (KYC)

D. International and Domestic NGOs
- Ateneo de Manila University – Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (KPNE)
- Philippine Business for the Environment (PBE)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Haribon Foundation (HF)
- Virginia Women For Tomorrow Foundation (WFT)
- Save the Children Federation (SCF)
- Plan International
- ZOG Asia Pacific Trade Center (PTC)

E. National Government Agencies & Government Institutions
- Department of Agriculture (DA)
- Department of Education (Dep. Ed)
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- Department of Finance (DOF)
- Department of Interior & Local Government (DILG)
- Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
- Department of Social Welfare & Development (DSWD)
- Department of Trade & Industry (DTI)
- Commission on Population (POPCOM)
- National Anti - Poverty Commission (NAPC)
- National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP)
- National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC)
- National Productivity Commission (NPC) & (OCD)
- Local Government Academy (LGA)
- Occupational Safety & Health Center (OSHC) & (OCD)

F. Local Government Units (LGUs) & Organizations
- Ang Bato Provincial Government, Antique Provincial Government, San Jose, Antique, Lgu Ng Mga Barangay, Municipal Government of San Jose de Buenavista, Antique, Provincial Government of Guimaras

G. Ministry of Works in Tanzania Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

H. Financial Institutions
- Rural Banks (RBs), Nationwide
- Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)
- Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP)
- Development & Rural Banks (Agusan del Norte, Pioneer Bank)
- Development Bank of the Phil. (DBP)

I. Academe
- Ang Colombo Pilo Staff College, University of Hawaii, Japan National Police Academy

J. Business Corporations
- Ang MEG Inc., S.I.G., San Miguel Corporation (SMC), Phil. Guidance Club, Inc.

RP, US . . .

Front page A2

the US Embassy, the Philippine National Police and the SBMA (Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority). A request was made then.

The VFA provision on questions is in Section 6, article 5: "The custody of any US personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the US military authorities and the agreement from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Ironic twist

It was the same provision the US Embassy cited on Monday when it turned down the Philippine government's New Year request to gain custody of the accused on grounds that the alleged rape was an "extraordinary crime."

In an ironic twist, the Philippine government ended up being the party making a "request" for custody—the term the DFA has been using when referring to the diplomatic note to the US mission.

On hindsight, a DFA official said the SBMA authorities should primarily be blamed for the government's loss in the two-month-long custody battle.

"Had they wanted for the DFA, or DOJ's Department of Justice's opinion on the matter, we would have denied the US request right there and then," the official, who asked not to be named, said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 15, 2009
2nd Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: 1 Sm 1:9-20, 24-28
Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

Jesus and his disciples arrive in Capernaum and a large crowd from Galilee followed him. A great number of people also came from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, Transjordania, and from the region of Tyre and Sidon, for they had heard of all that he was doing.

Because of the crowd, Jesus told his disciples to have a boat ready for him, to prevent the people from crushing him. He healed so many that all who had diseases kept pressing towards him to touch him. Even the people who had evil spirits, whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and cry out, "You are the Son of God."

But he warned them severely not to tell [anyone] who he was.

Commentary

David's people by power and in their king's absence of life. David was therefore sent to his friend Hushai [Hushai] to go back to Jerusalem [taking] to speak on his behalf. Jonathan pleads for David and God relents. David is brought back to a throbbing peace once. And so, just as he is about to open up with the stories of his sufferings and missionary with the author and Pharisees. The crowd speak in reaction, seeking to teach him. And as they see that he is the divine [and] those who are deranged, with mental illness and evil and unclean are cured by his divine power. Jesus knows their truth and his popularity will pass and they will end as cold foes.

Clarence Hilbourne Jr., A Man on It, 1st ed. (Mill Valley, California: Nu Century Press, 2008), 1-4. Pp. 192. ISBN 978-0-9815-0-0. Email: author@nu-cp.com. Website: http://www.nu-cp.com/ClarenceHilbourne.htm. Call: http://www.nu-cp.com/ClarenceHilbourne.htm. Call: http://www.nu-cp.com/ClarenceHilbourne.htm. Call

Oakwood mutiny leader at it again

By Tarra V. Quismundo

LOOKING FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE he were still leading a coup instead of being on trial for his role in the Oakwood mutiny, Lt. Jg. Antonio Trillanes IV used his latest court appearance to expound his views on the lingering political stalemate.

Trillanes, whose harangues were not what many television viewers would remember of that day-long mutiny three years ago, called on Filipinos last Tuesday to decide the country's fate.

"It's time for all of us to decide which side we will take, whether we are for [GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo)] or for change," Trillanes said, speaking in response to a motion of Espidol and Filipino.

"If you choose GMA, that means you are content with your situation now and that you can abide [for] another 20 [sic] seconds," said the self-styled leader of the "Magdalo" coup group.

Trillanes met with reporters briefly after Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court's Branch 148 skewered last Tuesday's hearing of the coup d'etat case against him and 30 other junior officers involved in the mutiny at the Oakwood Premier apartel-turned-hotel in Makati City on July 27, 2003.

In a rare manifestation of his dark, even three years ago, Trillanes had these words for those he deemed ignorant to his cause: "That means they are waiving their stake in the future to those who would want to decide. Where that happens, whatever is the outcome, they should just accept it[.... They have no right to complain because they have decided not to participate in that historic moment."

"If you choose change, it means you stand, and you are hoping that your quality of life, and that of your fellow Filipinos, will be better, or somehow you have hope that there will be power and progress in our country," he said, adding: "How dare's be afraid because whatever your decision may be, whatever the people will go, so will the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines). [The decision] is for the people to make."

"What they can expect from us is that we will do the right thing, that we will do what we have to," he added.

Tuesday's hearing was the first since Eleuterio Capt. Hermogenes Pardilla escaped his military guards after a postponed hearing at the Makati City Jail on Dec. 14.

Hours after his news conference, four other junior officers accused with Trillanes, escaped from detention at Fort Bonifacio (See story on Page 12)

Before entering the media, Trillanes conferred with 20 of his fellow accused – those who remained behind from a flurry of court hearings, led by Army Captain Milo Maestrecampo and Gerardo Gambala, over a letter to Mr. Arroyo last September apologizing for their part in the failed coup and pledging loyalty to her.

Trillanes's group, including Army, Navy, and Air Force officers, were in full military uniform during the hearing and defense lawyer Raul Palabay said this was a "show of solidarity." Maestrecampo's group were in plain clothes.

Asked if his remarks on Tuesday constituted a relinquishment of an earlier apology to the President, Trillanes replied, "No, since a more complicated fate it looks so. I leave that for another to rule."

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Army knew of escape plan

A coverage A1

Rural Bank had separately objected to the transfer on the grounds that only the Makati court can order the transfer (the detailed orders are Arroyo's prods).

Then the four officers managed to bolt from the CIDG, which was under heavy guard, Esperon could not explain.

"We're looking at possible angles. What's important here is that we have to get to the bottom of it to see negotiating at the detention center," the Army chief said at session's conference.

Palido denial

Palido said he left the CIDG at around 7:30 p.m. after arguing for more than three hours with Fort Bonifacio camp commander, Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, and then other Army officials against the transfer. But was not sanctioned by a court order.

The jailbreak came hours after Magdalo leader, Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, urged the nation to choose between senior gen and strongs. (See story on page A9.) and Tit days, when another more senior Army officer, Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr., had escaped.

Hours after the escape, President Macapagal-Arroyo summoned the Cabinet cluster on national security to Malacañang to discuss the matter.

Presidential Security Raul Gonzalez told the inquirer that during the meeting that started at 11 p.m. Tuesday and lasted till 3 a.m. yesterday, the President was "a little bit on hatred" about the escape.

The police placed stations nationwide on their highest alert level after Tuesday midnight two hours after the escape.

The police have joined a manhunt for the renegade soldiers, described by the military as men who "could be dangerous." The military is also on full alert.

At the Palace, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita charged that speculation that the escape was part of another coup attempt.

The heightened alert of the military was "about nothing," Ermita said, noting that the military had taken extra measures to prevent a similar occurrence.

Just escapees

Ermita said he has the four fugitives were "just escapees." But Esperon, who was also at the press conference, noted that the four officers had "unrelated" friends everywhere and "could be dangerous."

Rabonza, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '95, belonged to the elite Special Forces; San Juan, PMA Class '97, was with the Light Reaction Company; Bautista, PMA Class '98, was with the Philippine Army Light Armor Regiment; and Bartolome, PMA Class '91, was a company commander in the 1st Infantry Division.

The four officers are among 31 Magdalo soldiers facing trial for allegedly leading roughly 300 soldiers in the July 27, 2003 takeover of the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotel complex in Makati's Ayala Center.

While the 31 had been granted bail by a civilian court, they remained in military custody, facing among 96 other junior military officers who are facing court-martial proceedings.

Taking "full responsibility" for the escape, Esperon said he had relieved Rafael and ordered Army Inspector General Maj. Gen. Ferdinand Brawley to investigate the circumstances of the escape and the liability of people involved.

Civilian power

Asserting civilian power over the military, Palido asked a Makati court yesterday to reprimand Esperon for moving Rabonza, San Juan and Bautista to another detention facility without a court order.

Barely a day after the escape, Palido asked Makati RTC Branch 148 Judge Oscar Pimentel to cite Esperon for contempt.

"The only urgent motion is filed not only to seek reprimand against those who are arrogantly ignore the power and jurisprudence of this court, but also to remind the military establishment that civilian authority still reigns supreme over the military," Palido said in a motion.

Filed in the name of one of the accused, Capt. Alexi Rivera, the motion said Esperon's order to relieve the four officers from the rest of the Magdalo soldiers detained at the CIDG was a defiance of a civil court.

The motion also said that the transfer was "a direct contravention" of a commitment order from the court cited Nov. 18, 2003, which allowed Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and Rabonza, along with 14 other soldiers, under Philippine Marine Security Group (PMSG) custody. The commitment order was issued by Makati RTC Branch 61 Judge Romeo Buzon, whom was previously handled the case.

Palido's motion also said that during that on Tuesday afternoon, one of the four soldiers informed him that they were to be transferred to the DILG compound, and that a certain Major Balogun "threatened" them that "they would be killed in custody under intelligence compound if they refused to move."

The lawyer said that upon his arrival at the CIDG to check on the four officers, four Army officers whom he identified as General Rafael, Colonel Palomo, Major Rebosura and a certain Major Tolentino told him that Esperon had ordered them to transfer the four soldiers.

"The act of the military authorities is to close defiance of authorities, to justice, to dignity of the court, as it tends to bring the authority and administration of law into disrespect," the motion cited.

The incident was set for hearing on Jan. 23. The coup d'état chief complained four on Jan. 31. (With reports from Paige A. dal Pozo, Philip Robertson and Jocelyn Uy)

TIMELINE

Jan. 11, 2004

8:30 a.m.—Unknown soldiers arrive at the Makati RTC under heavy guard

9 a.m.—Coup chief case hearing starts

11:30 a.m.—Court hearing adjourns

12 noon—Magdalo Group spokesperson Navy Lt. (jg) Antonio Trillanes IV leaves statement to media

12:30 p.m.—Unknown soldiers leave Makati RTC

2 p.m.—Lawyer Raul Palido gets first transcript short conviction of Fort Bonifacio PIO personnel

4 p.m.—Palido arrives at Fort Bonifacio; sees Capt. Bathasar Bautista, 1Lt. Lawrence San Juan, Jessie Sac Isaiah, Pedro Bautista, 1Lt. Jay Custodio Montagnani's CIDG II; says the four have to see the boss

Camp commander Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, 3 others deny officials' order into a agreement with Palido; now planned transfer to another building

7:30 p.m.—Palido leaves Fort Bonifacio; soldiers under CIDG custody

8 p.m.—Palido arrives at Makati law office; prepares court motion; motion, gives interview with 7th reporters about Army transfer

9 p.m.—72 reporters learn Palido's office

9:30 p.m.—Army detention escape of Rabonza, San Juan, Sac Isaiah, Bautista (Jessie)

9:30 p.m.—Palido tells raid scene phoned by one of TV stories that not talked to about escape

11 p.m.—Reports of escape sweeps Manila; Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. confirms escape but would not give details of the Army officials' meeting

12 midnight—Army spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Bacarro sends media advisory through text messages

Jan. 13, 2004

7 a.m.—Rivera to give press conference at Fort Bonifacio

8 a.m.—Esperon gives press conference at Fort Bonifacio

Esperon embarrassed but he's not quitting

By Cid C. Cabuenagan Jr.

HE MIGHT BE RED-FACED from having five escapees in a little over a month under his watch, but Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon is not about to step down.

"I am embarrassed by this situation and I am taking full responsibility for it. But I do not think an offer of resignation from is the point. I'd like to believe it is not cause for concern," said Esperon at a briefing 17 hours after four junior officers belonging to the Magdalo group were bothered on base and hied their ride to Fort Bonifacio.

Last Dec. 14, Marine Capt. Nicanor Bautista escaped from his guards and has since roamed the military with his entrepreneurial interest

Hoops and visitors.

His ground commander, Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, has taken the fall for the jailbreak Tuesday night.

"I am planning my succession, for us the ground and I have in fact relieved him from the position, Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael himself approached me and admitted to his mistake and volunteered to leave. I said, I appreciate that," Esperon said.

Esperon could not give a full accounting of how the most seven escaped from their guards and cell, except that they piled up several shirts to look like sleeping bodies.

Last Dec. 31, Marine Capt. Nicanor Bautista escaped from his guards and has since roamed the military with his entrepreneurial interest

Magdalo lawyer, senators don't buy . . .

From page A1

a release in the implementation of the operational call," Rivera said. "However, if they are being hidden, why are they being hid- den?"

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., the committee vice chair, warned that the escape might be part of coordinated moves to stage another mutiny against the administration, noting that it coincides with Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV called on the public to discuss whether to support President Macapagal-Arroyo or change.

Trillanes said that if the public chose change, the armed forces would support that decision.

As of press time, Public said he had not issued from his client, who supposedly escaped from a Fort Bonifacio detention center Tuesday night.

Public representative Army Lts. Sergio Catalan, Jr., Antonio Bautista, Jimmy Constantino and Patricia Bautista is

Army Capt. Hellmund Rabonza is represented by former Sen. Neptali Gonzales.

Lagadang also expressed hope for the lives of the four junior officers.

Lagadang, in an interview with reporters in the Sandiganbayan yesterday, said he had no reservation any word from any of the four junior officers, especially from their client, Rabonza.

He said the situation was quite unusual because Rabonza while in detention had been able to communicate with him.

"Now that they are free now, if they have really escaped as the military claimed, I believe that they should be able to communicate with us with ease," Lagadang said.

Lagadang wondered how the four junior officers could have escaped when "they were detained and they had the support of people working at the camp.

What Marine Capt. Nicanor Bautista escaped from military custody on the morning of Dec. 14 last year, he called up Publicos to inform him of his escape.

Publicos said he would only believe that the four officers had escaped if they themselves told him so.

No word from clients

As of yesterday afternoon, even the families did not hear from the four officers.

"If we don't hear from them, we will file a petition for habeas corpus in court," Lagadang said.

Interviewed on Sunday midnight, Publico said he could not believe the four officers have escaped. "I am concerned about their safety."

Yesterday, Publico maintained that when he left the Intelligence Security Group (ISG) compound at 7:30 p.m., several soldiers entered the compound apparently to take custody of the four officers.

Publico argued the more than three hours with Army officials, objecting to the Army's plan to transfer the four to another detention center without a court order.

With Publico at the time were some relatives of the officers concerned.

They were afraid. There were reports of soldiers in the area, there was a lot of the violence. Where? Hell, the soldiers were in," Publico said.

Lawyer an accomplice?

Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. yesterday insinuated that Publico was an accomplice in the escape.

"The allegation that the escape of Captain Rabonza et al. is the activity orchestrated by the none is bereft of truth. Such allegation only case to demean the Army. It is not meant to cover his possible complicity in the escape," Esperon said in a news conference.

Public said he found Esperon's charges at first incensing "because he said the four officials spoke to last night how they said they."

"But I will not own compromising filing charges against Esperon unless he retracted his statement.

"By saying that, he's saying all lawyers. Lawyers have a job to do in accordance with law. He should not be threatening us," Public said.

For 7 months, FBI clueless on Fil-Am . . .

A coverage A1

and records show he surrendered to the FBI and is in solitary confinement here.—Los Alamos enforcement pay and an entry level FBI salary.

But for at least seven months, the FBI did nothing, sending spies to No. 2 mission after fighting for more natural right of registration to be removed.—agent.

Safeguards the FBI had put in place after it was ousted by the Robert Hanssen spy scandal in 2001 failed to raise red flags about Ampoloza's activities, according to interviews and court reports reviewed by The Associated Press.

After the FBI in 2001 arrested Hanssen, who admitted selling for Moscow for cash and diamonds over two decades, the agency was empowered to adopt tough new safeguards to check spies in its ranks. "We've moved to address that," FBI Director Robert Mueller promised in April 2002.

It has outside help—US customs officials separately developed signs that Ampoloza was a spy, but failed to alert the FBI. The lawyer even discovered he was sending sensitive US intelligence assessments about the Philippines' government to Filipino opposition leaders, court records say.

Ampoloza, who pleaded guilty to espionage charges, faces a maximum life sentence. He is due to be sentenced in January.

Ampoloza, a former aide of Lucas Beltran, was arrested along with Ampoloza in the United States last September for allegedly stealing government secrets.

The duties dominant dismissed President Macapagal-Arroyo, a US ally in the war on terror, as "a needy, secretive leader" with an "overbearing personal style." The report was labeled as "informal assessment by a senior US government policy maker." Ms Arroyo has demanded an explanation from the US Embassy in Manila.

FBI waited

Those who helped the FBI after Hanssen's deadly betrayal to Russia say investigators had Ampoloza in their sights almost a year before they moved to arrest him.

"I don't know why they had to wait until somebody turned him in," said former Attorney General Griffin B. Bell, a member of the commission that investigated FBI security after Hanssen's. "They should have been probing their systems. The question is, how could he get by them long?"

Rep. Jane Harman, whose House intelligence committee received classified briefings on Ampoloza, agreed. "Bells and whistles should have gone on some place, and they didn't," she said.

The FBI acknowledged it did not suspect Ampoloza until the April tip from Customs but said it eventually would have detected his activities in time.

"I'm confident our security procedures would have picked this up," said Leslie Wiser Jr., head of the FBI's New Jersey office and a lead investigator in the 2004 spy case against CIA officer Alcides de Kaos. "I'm glad we didn't have to wait for that; we'll take it any year we can."

Under review

The justice department supervises prosecution for federal crimes, but the FBI's spy-catching techniques even before Ampoloza's arrest. That probe is coordinating.

Ampoloza's lawyers and prosecutors are trying to wrap up a plea deal that would ensure a guilty plea and his cooperation. Prosecutors have said Ampoloza has "essentially admitted" to taking classified documents.

The 47-year-old Ampoloza was born in the Philippines and became a naturalized US citizen in 1991. He served 21 years in the Marines, ultimately as a gunnery sergeant. He worked at the White House on the security detail for the Presidents H. Bush and Bill Clinton between 1991 and 2002 before joining the FBI as a translator. He was assigned at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

Ampoloza is not charged with espionage, which carries a maximum penalty of capital punishment, or jobs documents secrets, but instead, he's charged to secret papers with conspiring to steal government secrets, selling to a foreign agent and improperly removing FBI computers. Those charges carry a maximum of 25 years.

Ampoloza declined on three occasions through his lawyer, US public defender Gurney Keller, to speak with The Associated Press.

Prosecutors have said about the 4 stories for Ampoloza's, except to say that he was deeply in debt and appeared to live beyond his means in a small acreage cited in court records. Arrested the allegedly wrote to the Senate President, "I have no other option but to offer my Constitution would suggest."

'181 classified documents'

By the time FBI agents arrested him, in September, he had downloaded at least 181 classified documents related to the Philippines, officials said.

It wasn't supposed to happen that way.

No alarms

But despite guidelines in Hanssen, Ampoloza's activities failed to trigger alarms with any of the 9000 new computer monitoring, financial checks, polygraph tests and other on-hand tests.

Paul Moore, who shared a cubicle with Ampoloza at the FBI headquarters, said he never suspected his coworker was a Russian spy inside the FBI. Moore said, "suspicion isn't automatic. You tend to find explanations for anomalous behavior." All

- Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo "is a weak incompetent leader who is surrounded by scumbags, religious fanatics, overbearing personal style and inability to connect with ordinary Filipinos have kept her popularity ratings low in a country that reveres warm, and outgoing personalities." Ms Arroyo's husband "is intimidated by erstwhile rumors of corruption and cronyism, leaving his legitimacy once again in question following his rise to power."—from a Secret-page classified US government report dated August 2003.

- Philippine Vice President Noli de Castro "fumbled opportunities and some mistakes in press conferences." He appeared "to be ill-informed on issues, and is not considered a strong player." He has been openly ridiculed for some dubious behavior, including using swear, illegitimate children," Estrada "remains on the second tier of power brokers in the country."—From a Secret-page classified US government report dated August 2003.

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Gen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., the committee vice chair, warned that the escape might be part of coordinated moves to stage another mutiny against the administration, noting that it coincides with Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV called on the public to discuss whether to support President Macapagal-Arroyo or change.

Trillanes said that if the public chose change, the armed forces would support that decision.

As of press time, Public said he had not issued from his client, who supposedly escaped from a Fort Bonifacio detention center Tuesday night.

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Army Capt. Hellmund Rabonza is represented by former Sen. Neptali Gonzales.

Lagadang also expressed hope for the lives of the four junior officers.

Lagadang, in an interview with reporters in the Sandiganbayan yesterday, said he had no reservation any word from any of the four junior officers, especially from their client, Rabonza.

He said the situation was quite unusual because Rabonza while in detention had been able to communicate with him.

"Now that they are free now, if they have really escaped as the military claimed, I believe that they should be able to communicate with us with ease," Lagadang said.

Lagadang wondered how the four junior officers could have escaped when "they were detained and they had the support of people working at the camp.

What Marine Capt. Nicanor Bautista escaped from military custody on the morning of Dec. 14 last year, he called up Publicos to inform him of his escape.

Publicos said he would only believe that the four officers had escaped if they themselves told him so.

No word from clients

As of yesterday afternoon, even the families did not hear from the four officers.

"If we don't hear from them, we will file a petition for habeas corpus in court," Lagadang said.

Interviewed on Sunday midnight, Publico said he could not believe the four officers have escaped. "I am concerned about their safety."

Yesterday, Publico maintained that when he left the Intelligence Security Group (ISG) compound at 7:30 p.m., several soldiers entered the compound apparently to take custody of the four officers.

Publico argued the more than three hours with Army officials, objecting to the Army's plan to transfer the four to another detention center without a court order.

With Publico at the time were some relatives of the officers concerned.

They were afraid. There were reports of soldiers in the area, there was a lot of the violence. Where? Hell, the soldiers were in," Publico said.

Lawyer an accomplice?

Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. yesterday insinuated that Publico was an accomplice in the escape.

"The allegation that the escape of Captain Rabonza et al. is the activity orchestrated by the none is bereft of truth. Such allegation only case to demean the Army. It is not meant to cover his possible complicity in the escape," Esperon said in a news conference.

Public said he found Esperon's charges at first incensing "because he said the four officials spoke to last night how they said they."

"But I will not own compromising filing charges against Esperon unless he retracted his statement.

"By saying that, he's saying all lawyers. Lawyers have a job to do in accordance with law. He should not be threatening us," Public said.

Excerpts from e-mails, documents in espionage case

SOME QUOTES IN THE CASE against an FBI intelligence specialist, Leandro Ampoloza, 47, of Woodbury, New Jersey:

- "Sir, the other day Leandro [sic] Ampoloza called me. . . . He wants to talk to you and give you some updates on the political situation in the country."—E-mail allegedly sent in January 2003 by Michael Ray Aquino, a former senior Philippine police official, to Filipino opposition Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, Aquino's former boss.

- "I feel all the information he has provided is very significant. . . . This guy will continue sending [us]."—E-mail allegedly sent in January 2003 from Lacson to Aquino.

- "We are excited would you please check out the website [and be affected] accordingly. Again, please protect the source.—file"—E-mail allegedly sent in August 2003 from Ampoloza to former Philippine President Joseph Estrada.

- "Ampoloza is a significant risk of disappearance because of the significant possibility that if convicted of the offenses charged, the strength of the existence of the commission of these two serious offenses involving the subscription crime (sic) and theft of classified information, frequent travel and ties outside the United States, the existence of significant debt and apparent suicide employment issue. All of these facts drive the determination that Ampoloza's appearance at trial cannot be assured or that he will not appear at future proceedings."—US filing before Judge Patty Shwartz.

- "While Estrada espouses a champion of the poor image, he is an elitist. Another fact of his life is his love affair with young women, that of a heavy drinking, playful and playboy . . . He has been openly ridiculed for some dubious behavior, including using swear, illegitimate children," Estrada "remains on the second tier of power brokers in the country."—From a Secret-page classified US government report dated August 2003.

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HONORING AND CELEBRATING OUR TRADITIONS

"Leading the Way of Reforms Toward a Liberating Society"

Six decades ago, our forebears founded a political party that has brought honor and pride to our country and people. Today, we have come to celebrate the Liberal Party's 60th Founding Anniversary, symbolizing a new beginning and signifying renewal as well as change.

We also join hands in gratitude and respect for our great Liberal forebears whose vigor, character and devotion to our country have enriched our party, won the respect of countless Filipinos and bequeathed a legacy of lifetime service and bravery that shall put us in unpredictable pages in the history of the republic and of the party.

The torch has been passed to us - the new generation of Liberals- proud of our heritage and unwilling to permit or witness the slow undoing of our most cherished human rights to which our forebears were so steadfastly committed. Conscious effort must be expended in seeing that our party remains loyalist to its original purposes. Let us take care that our party does not establish a hegemony that is destructive and independent of the reforming impulse that gave birth to the liberal ideals. United, there is little we cannot do; divided, there is little that we can do, for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

The strength of the party lies in its members and principles. I believe that through these principles, we will be heard; in being heard, we will be understood; and in being understood, we will be accepted.

Long live the Liberal Party!

FRANKLIN M. DRILON
Senate President
President, Liberal Party

PartidoLIBERAL
PILIPINAS
"Home of Filipino Liberal Movement"

www.liberalparty.ph

For details, call the
LP National Headquarters
LP Makinoo Building
2178 Chino Roces Ave.
1231 Makati City, Philippines
Tel. No.: (+632) 843-7583
Telefax: (+632) 893-4384
Email: admin@liberalparty.ph

Anniversary Celebration Chairman
Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan

Anniversary Celebration Co-Chairman
Former Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad

Head, Anniversary Task Force
Concepcion "Chit" Asis

Schedule of Activities

Thursday, January 19, 2006

9:00 a.m.
Advancing the Gains of Liberal Democracy in Asia:
Regional Conference on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Liberal Party
Quest Hotel Makati, Makati City

1:00 p.m.
Launching of the book, The Dilemma of Philippine Campaign Politics: Alternative Campaign Strategies in the 2004 National Elections, by the Ateneo School of Government
Quest Hotel Makati, Makati City

3:00 p.m.
Manila Anniversary Celebration
LP Manila Chapter Leaders
Plaza Miranda, Quiapo, Manila

Friday, January 20, 2006

10:00 a.m.
Opening of Exhibit and launch of Liberal Chronicles:
60 Years of the Liberal Party, 1946-2006
Ali Mall, Cubao, Q.C.

Whole Day
Celebrations among the local Chapters of the LP

10:30 a.m.
INAUGURATION OF LP PROVL. HQ
Guest Cong. Rufty Biazon
Bangued

9:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
MEDICAL MISSION
Cagayan

9:00 a.m.
LIBERAL FORUM ON CHARTER CHANGE
Speaker: Gov. Victor Ortega
La Union

8:00 a.m. 12:00 noon
TREE PLANTING and Youth General Assembly
Naga City

8:00 a.m. 12:00 noon
MEDICAL MISSION in Alabang
Muntinlupa City

8:00 am 12:00 nn
Distribution of Dome Tents to All Public Schools (3rd Dist, QC) and Free ECG
Barangay Escopa I, Quezon City

10:00 a.m.
MEDIA FORUM
CARAGA/Butuan City

10:00 a.m.
Protocols and Media Blitz
Davao City

Saturday, January 21, 2006

11:00 a.m.
Testimonial Luncheon for Pres. Sec. Pres. Jovito R. Salonga, Chairman Emeritus, LP
Kalayaan Hall, Club Filipino Greenhills, San Juan, M.M.

Monday, 23 January 2006

2:00 p.m.
Awarding Ceremony for winners of "The Filipino as a Liberal" Essay Writing Contest and launch of compilation of essays
Bulay Kalinaw, LP Diliman, Q.C.

The WORLD

Elmer Lorenzo B. Gesco

Donors pledge $1.9B to fight bird flu

BEIJING—AN INTERNATIONAL BIRD FLU CONference was hailed a major success after it wrapped up Wednesday with donor countries and organizations pledging $1.9 billion to fight the killer virus.

The figure far surpassed the $1.5 billion target of the two-day International Pledging Conference on Avian and Human Influenza (ICPAIA), also attended by officials from half the nations on the planet.

"It sets a conference of commitment and pledging that really deserved scholarly," the UN's coordinator on avian and human influenza, David Nabarro, told reporters at the end of the conference.

"We've got a fantastic set of pledges from poor countries as well as rich countries.

"Even countries that cannot put money into the funding are saying we are going to commit our people and our governments to get the results." The European Commission's for Health and Consumer Safety Markos Kyprianou, said nearly $1 billion had been pledged to prevent, which would go mainly to low-income countries in Southeast Asia and Africa.

The other $900 million would come in loans, he said.

The United States was the biggest donor, pledging $334 million, followed by the European Union (EU), which said it would offer $260 million. Within the EU, $110 million will come directly from the 25 member states while the European Commission will follow another $111 million.

Japan committed $109 million to the global fight, while Russia pledged $6.9 million and Australia $6.5 million (nearly $4.7 million).

China, which co-hosted the summit along with the World Bank and the European Commission, pledged 10 million dollars.

The higher-than-expected pledges came after the conference was told repeatedly of the immense dangers for the world posed by the bird flu virus, which has killed around 80 people since resurfacing in 2003.

With the virus spreading from Asia to the Middle East and now to Europe in the past year, the world feared that he could become a pandemic that would kill millions. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told the conference via video link that the world was not prepared for a pandemic and called for major efforts in stepping up preparations.

"There's no time to waste. Let's ensure we're ready. We are not yet there," Annan said. "To be truly prepared we would need to mount a tremendous effort." With the disease killing four people in Turkey this month, the first deaths outside Southeast Asia and China, the conference heard that the virus was capable of spreading easily across borders. "All countries can be affected if a pandemic occurs," World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz said in a televised speech.

"All countries share responsibility to fight the spread of this disease and to put human and financial resources behind the effort," Officials said the next steps was to assess funding proposals from the needy countries and set up a system to ensure the money is well spent to implement a three-year action plan laid out at the first donors' conference in Geneva in November.

The plan aims to keep bird flu from occurring from its current form, which is mainly transmitted from poultry to humans, to one that is transmissible among humans.

Most of the money will be spent on boosting public awareness programs, stamping out outbreaks, detection and surveillance, disinfection, slaughter and vaccination of poultry, and compensation for farmers. AFP

Tokyo scandal drags down Asian stocks

TOKYO—A SCANDAL AT ONE OF Japan's top Internet firms reverberated across Asia Wednesday, dragging down stock markets after the region's biggest bourse in Tokyo was forced to collect early data.

The Tokyo Stock Exchange took the unprecedented step of shutting down 20 minutes ahead of schedule to hold off a stampede of investors selling off the market and threatening to crash the system.

The system was battered by the escalating woes of Japan's Livedoor, once seen as a symbol of youth in Asia's largest economy but now beset by allegations of cooking the books and illegal insider trading.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 broadcasted index plummeted 464.77 points or 2.94 percent to 15,341.14 points by the ends close but at one point had sunk as far as 4.7 percent into the red before recovering.

Major stocks markets were down across Asia with the sole exception of Shanghai, which piked up 1.06 percent on fresh fund inflows into China.

Nil Asian markets are down eight waves the board including Japan," said Stephen Wright, head of advisory at AMP Securities in New Zealand, adding that losses in Wellington did comparatively well by dropping only 0.56 percent.

The wounded yield down recently took in Europe, where stock exchanges were largely down.

Adding to the gloom was a downturn overnight on Wall Street, which skidded on as oil price hike and worries about repeated results of US semiconductor giant Intel.

"Today is a very bad day by its pleased stock markets, mainly due to Tokyo's massive fall," said Sakir Khamlichi, an analyst at Thinly Securities in Bangkok, where share prices were off 1.30 percent.

The losses were the biggest in Taiwan and South Korea. Taipei share prices plummeted by 3.16 percent, with the latest credit card fraud political concerns also spoiling the mood. AFP

Pope's attacker may be sent back to jail

ANKARA—MEHMET ALI AGCA, THE man who shot pope John Paul II in 1981, faced a possible return to jail when Turkey's justice minister on Tuesday sought to overturn a court decision freeing him after a quarter-century.

Justice Minister Cemil Cicek formally requested that a court overturn the decision to release Agca, after weeks of ripping debate as to whether the 48-year-old former fascist could serve his time elsewhere should he return to be committed to Turkey before his release on March.

After nearly 25 years in jail, most of it in solitude, Agca was set free Monday in a surprise reduction in the term of a series of terrorists and other criminals however in the penal code, but reports say deductions from his jail term have been miscalculated.

In his letter to the appeals court, cancelled by the Anatolia news agency, Cicek argued against a court decision to deduct the time Agca served in trial from his Turkish jail sentence.

He also added that the deduction was made on the grounds that Agca had served 10 years in Italy for the attack on the pope, when in fact he had served only 10 years and one month.

The minister said that Agca still had to serve a reduced 12-year sentence for the 1979 murder of a prominent journalist, arguing that the said sentence could not have been deducted from his overall jail time.

The former extreme right-wing militant "has not wasted the right to parole," Cicek said.

Former justice minister Hikmet Sami Turk, who oversaw Agca's extradition from Italy in 2000, said he should have remained in jail until 2021 even with the most generous calculation of his sentence reductions.

Agca's lawyer Mustafa Demirbag, however, claims his client should in fact have been released earlier than Jan. 12.

Touted in the press as the country's most notorious killer, Agca was released from a high-security prison in Istanbul on Thursday to a heavy welcome laid out by his supporters and a banner-laden entry.

He had been incarcerated in Turkey following his extradition from Italy where he served 19 years for his assassination attempt on the pope on May 13, 1981. He shot and seriously wounded John Paul II. The pontiff later visited him in prison and publicly forgave him.

In Turkey Agca was sentenced to prison term for two armed robberies in the 1970s and was also supposed to serve a reduced 10-year sentence for murdering prominent Turkish journalist Abdi Ipekci, the chief editor and columnist of the liberal daily Milliyet, in 1979.

But he was released after serving only five and a half years due to the series of sentence reductions.

On Wednesday, a Turkish military hospital declared Agca unfit for military service, which is obligatory for all Turkish male over 18.

Agca's attorney Demirbag said the hospital had decided against awarding Agca into the military on account of his lengthy jail term.

"Agca is exempt from military service," Demirbag said, recalling a legal provision which keeps military service for those who have served more than five-and-a-half years in jail.

"Agca is now a free ordinary person like everybody else," he said. AFP

AIM ATTACK! rocket sits on the pad after high-winds forced Nasa to scrub the launch of the unmanned New Horizons spacecraft on a mission to the planet Pluto, at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Tuesday Jan. 17. (See story on Page A11) AP

The Republic of the Philippines

Invites the Owners of

Each Series of Eligible Bonds

to submit, in an auction for each series of Eligible Bonds, offers to exchange:

- 3-Year Eligible Bonds of each series for 3-Year Philippine peso-denominated Bonds due 2009 (the "3-Year Benchmark Bonds")
- 5-Year Eligible Bonds of each series for 5-Year Philippine peso-denominated Bonds due 2011 (the "5-Year Benchmark Bonds")
- 7-Year Eligible Bonds of each series for 7-Year Philippine peso-denominated Bonds due 2013 (the "7-Year Benchmark Bonds")

The 3-Year Benchmark Bonds, the 5-Year Benchmark Bonds and the 7-Year Benchmark Bonds are collectively referred to as the Benchmark Bonds.

THE INVITATION TO EXCHANGE 3-YEAR ELIGIBLE BONDS WILL EXPIRE AT 4:00 P.M. (MANILA TIME) ON FRIDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2006, UNLESS EXTENDED OR EARLIER TERMINATED.

THE INVITATION TO EXCHANGE 5-YEAR AND 7-YEAR ELIGIBLE BONDS WILL EXPIRE AT 4:00 P.M. (MANILA TIME) ON FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2006, UNLESS EXTENDED OR EARLIER TERMINATED.

The Republic of the Philippines ("the Republic") hereby invites owners of Eligible Bonds to submit offers to exchange Eligible Bonds for Benchmark Bonds, tendered down into three subgroups as referred to above (the "Invitation"). The terms and conditions of the exchange offer are set forth in the Offering Circular dated 10 January 2006, copies of which may be obtained from the website of the Bureau of the Treasury of the Philippines, which can be accessed through the Internet addresses www.treasury.gov.ph, or from a Government Securities Eligible Dealer ("GSED"). Interested owners of Eligible Bonds should contact a GSED for any questions they may have.

The purpose of the Invitation is to create new series of Government Bonds which will be larger in size than existing series of peso bonds. Benchmark Bonds are intended to be more liquid and therefore, should trade in the secondary market more efficiently. By creating Benchmark Bonds, the Republic aims to improve markets for investors and thereby lower its borrowing costs over time. The Invitation is part of a broader program of the Republic to manage its liabilities.

This announcement is not an offer or a solicitation of offers. The Invitation is made solely pursuant, and subject to, the Offering Circular. Where any matter under discussion does not reflect the way in which international convention is interpreted by reference to the Offering Circular, and in any matter, announcements or communications that may be expressly authorized by the Republic. The Republic has not authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different. The Invitation does not constitute, and may not be used in connection with, an offer or solicitation by anyone in any jurisdiction in which such offer or solicitation is not authorized or to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation. No one is qualified to do so or to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation.

A list showing the Eligible Bonds can be found in the Offering Circular dated 10 January 2006 which is available on the website of the Bureau of Treasury of the Philippines (www.treasury.gov.ph).

WARNING TO THE PUBLIC

"IBFW 2000" is a brand name and trademark of high quality imported ballpoint pens manufactured abroad and distributed by IBFW Enterprises, with offices located at Suite 1001 Tytana Plaza, Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Binondo, Manila. IBFW Enterprises has pending patent applications for its Industrial Design, as well as the Trademark, with the Intellectual Property Office, with Application Serial No. 03-2006-000032.

It has come to the attention of IBFW Enterprises that a ballpoint pen using this same design has appeared in the market. The size, color and appearance of the product are similar to the original IBFW 2000. To guide the consumer, below is an illustration of the ballpoint pen.

We would like to warn the public about the imitation ballpoint pen. May we advise the general public not to purchase the imitation IBFW 2000 ballpoint pen. To be sure, purchase IBFW 2000 ballpoint pens only from authorized and reputable dealers and outlet stores.

As for those who trade in the imitation IBFW 2000 ballpoint pen, this is a clear case of patent infringement, a criminal activity which carries with it penal as well as civil sanctions under R.A. 8293, and related laws, rules and regulations. We have enlisted the aid of various law enforcement agencies and legal action is forthcoming. Cease and desist now or face the consequences.

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1826 Tytana Plaza, Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz
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FAX No. 242-5630

ANG & ASSOCIATES
Counsel for IBFW Enterprises
No. 19 Temperance Line, Interville Subd.
Brgy. Culiat, Quezon City
Telephone Numbers: 931-3328 to 29
Telefax: 921-6228
E-mail Address: attyang@mozcfs.net.ph

4 terrorists killed in US air strike in Pakistan

Major powers nix Iran call for nuclear talks

Nasa Pluto probe launch postponed

WORLDBRIEFS

Sharon's breathing tube replaced

Deadliest Afghan suicide bombing probed

Kidnappers threaten to kill US journalist in Iraq

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Vol. 21 No. 40

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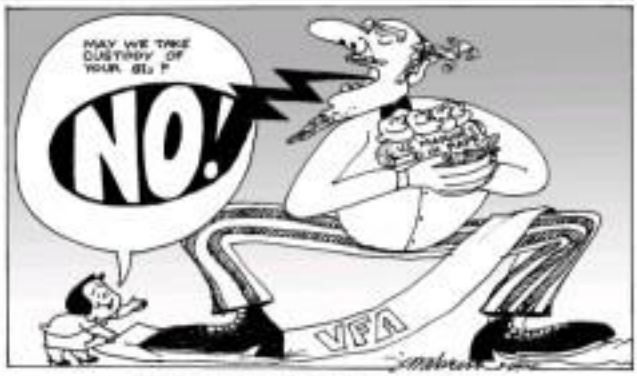


Just noted?

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TOOK it's sweet time before responding to the Philippine government's request to be given custody of four US Marines accused of raping a Filipina in the Subic Bay Freeport last November. And it probably would have taken even longer had the Regional Trial Court of Olongapo not issued a warrant for their arrest last week. But the answer would still have been the same: a strong, unequivocal no.

Editorial

In a note verbale dated Jan. 16, 2006, or exactly two months after the Philippine request was filed, the US Embassy told the Philippine government that "the US government shall continue to exercise custody until completion of all judicial proceedings." The embassy said the decision was based on Art. 5, Sec. 6 of the 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement, which says that custody of US personnel accused of violating Philippine laws "shall immediately reside with United States military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the crime until completion of all judicial proceedings."

That request was apparently made—and immediately granted—during a phone call made by a US Embassy official to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez one day after the alleged rape occurred. A few days later, however, the Arroyo administration reversed its position, with the Department of Foreign Affairs formally asking the US government to turn over the accused Marines. The DFA cited Art. 5, Sec. 1(d) of the VFA which states that "confinement or detention by Philippine authorities of US military personnel shall be carried out in facilities agreed on by appropriate Philippine and US authorities" and said it was looking forward to holding discussions with US Embassy officials regarding the matter.

No one knows whether any such discussions were actually held. All the public learned was that embassy officials had allowed Foreign Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA, to have a peep at the accused and that he came away satisfied that they were not free to roam around Manila's Ermita as despite the delights of Manila's red-light district. But when finally the embassy rejected the request for custody, it claimed that it had "taken full account of the position of the government regarding custody."

That sounded very much like then Defense Rep. Raul Gonzalez dismissing with a curt "Noted" every motion made by opposition lawmakers against the inclusion of questionable remarks during the canvassing of votes for president and vice president in the 2004 elections. And as with Gonzalez, the Americans think that is just the issue is over.

It does not. The response to the Philippine request can hardly be deemed satisfactory. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo earlier said the Philippines would insist on having "actual physical custody" of the accused Marines since this was an "extraordinary case." Rape is classified as a heinous crime under Philippine laws and if this case doesn't fall under the category of "extraordinary cases" mentioned in the VFA, maybe US officials should define what to them is "extraordinary."

The question now is whether the Arroyo administration will hold on to this position and pursue it until the Americans agree to give up the four Marines. Their insistence on keeping custody of the accused Marines has revived old resentments over the many times US officials blocked the efforts of Filipino victims to find justice by spiriting away accused American servicemen. Given that record, no one feels reassured by US assurals that it "remains committed on seeing that justice is served, and looks forward to a fair and impartial process that can provide a just outcome."

If the American officials insist on interpreting agreements only in a way that favors their own citizens, if they have twice given soldiers accused of murder and other serious crimes in the past, what is to prevent them from declaring a miscarriage of justice in this case, no matter how fairly the trial is conducted? And what is to keep them from sending the accused safely home? Like the US hawks of old, the VFA is starting to look like an albatross to many Filipinos. If the Senate in 1991 could summon the will to terminate the lease on the bases, it shouldn't find it too hard to abrogate the VFA now that it is again being used to shield American soldiers accused of violating a Filipina.

Hara-kiri or Russian roulette?

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

IN IT'S STAMPEDE TO OVERBUILD, THE CONGRESSIONAL Window, by clumping on a parliamentary basis at government, the House of Representatives offered the Senate both beyond Boston ambitious Japanese hara-kiri.

Scholars like Ateneo's Joaquin Bernas, S.J., have forcibly explained why the House can't over-load the Constitution, if the Senate sits out its hands. A bicameral system means exactly that. Father Bernas wrote: two houses, voting separately, must approve or reject a proposed change, by a vote of three-fourths of their members.

It takes two to tango. Waddlewise, like former President Fidel Ramos, said into the dance floor. However, to preserve the separation of powers most sober members, former Sen. Heherson Alvarez, has not said: "The Supreme Court will eventually side with the Senate... and this room will be lost."

Under the Constitution formula, peddled by the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party, the Senate must self-destruct, by the "middle of this year," to keep Bernard Shaw pun is to well: "Tell sure this window is not in flames unless people without blushing."

As the House speaker, Deputy Speaker Jose Mendiola Gerry Salapuddin, Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Barangay del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. proposed that "[t]he President must wish Lakas caucuses for a meeting of minds." So, the Constitution's Sec. 16 (3) provides Macapagal-Arroyo, would "negotiate" with senators entering into amendments."

In 2001, the Shogun Senate Tokugawas forbade the third appetite. Before that, statesman Shakespeare had said to nether mantle. Will Ramos and Juan de Ozmena "lambada" the Senate? Or would they jar their or human system, chorting: "Don't worry. It's not loaded?"

The hard-nosed Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's chairmanship, stripped from the pro-Arroyo majority senator, "The Con-Ass Series of Ifs Anyone, former President Fidel V. Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia mistakenly believes that the senators would agree to write their own obituary."

As De Venecia & Company still find, the shit may take forever to taste. "Ignore cold daughter / There is a prohibition on divine / That restore

Email: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

my weak hand," Imogen says in Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline.' Sir Anton has not given these 24 senators and men any cogent reason for suicide. And who, in the society, would lay down his life for Ralph Nader, Jose... or Bing?

The Supreme Court, however, won't be pushed by timelines set by politicians others—and it—this one reaches the Sept. 15 bound. Father Bernas wrote even this early.

Neither will the former. The senators will not be bound by a House resolution seeking to convene Congress into a Constituent Assembly. Senator Arroyo stressed. Although the solution, senators seeks to head off a collision with the House by pushing, 3 political organizers, prescribed debates be ahead. But in remember and dose on the floor.

And why not? It's the basic law not as impertinent as those protracted, months hearings by Congress? "A constitution," it has been aptly said, "is not written for the moment. It endures for the moral consensus the people already have reached."

Sen. Richard Gordon, ensemble, put his finger on what huge many about the increasingly ill-tempered House: It acts as though the people agree to what Julius wants. "Not each have an interim parliamentary government might because you are it," Gordon said. "It would't count historical things. But the people are willing to accept it." Indeed, there's hand evidence his words echoed the public sentiment.

Pulse Asia's last survey showed that more than half (51 percent) of the Filipinos, give or take 3 percentage points, want a shift to a Constitutional amendment at this time. Inquirer's Isabel Menard reminded us in a column. So one of 10 don't buy a parliamentary system.

"But proportion has remained remarkably steady at least over the past few years."

Or has that opposition remained stiffened?

The Comelec's computerization has lobed patently unacceptable ideas. From scrubbing the 2007 elections to getting hardcore-of-no, precious safeguards. Those have one weapon: waiting.

The House, for example, hastily dumped the "No ID" idea on the Commission saying: "They can't technologically would for it." That's a 56. Whereas Cross hill would call that a "terminological inexact libido."

In between actions the Clash Jose Abueva and US officers voted down "No ID" as a no-brainer. But they were smothered by 12 votes for a proposal that won't fly—including the nonresident vote of Commissioner Sergio Apostol.

What's equally disturbing is Apostol has launched a campaign for law professor Raul Bangalangan's nightly calls, a bid to put greater stress on the liberty of expression. Apostol would nudge into seemingly harmless word—"implausible"—into the Bill of Rights clause that covers freedom.

The Comelec version just "humorous," in Apostol's own words. It was an appeal to media: behave yourselves. Arched eyed flutty is tolerable in political rallies, Bangalangan warns. But when rushed on to a Bill of Rights, arbitrarily can mean abuse. "Sordid relics of conditioned tongues" affects that every word, every clause must be given effect.

"There are absolutes in the bill of Rights," Justice Hugo Black pointed out. "They were put in there for purpose by men who knew what words meant and meant their prohibitions were absolute."

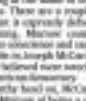
Such revisions may not people who share Apostol's propensities to dump an "required" Bill of Rights provision. Like that it does exist. Irony is the liberty of the press.

The 56-42 provision, this proposed edition of free expression, will trigger an inevitable lawsuits. And the first victim will be the literary Patron De Venecia Unwritable—and their unedited agenda.

# # #

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Good night and good luck



There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

YOU GOTTA LOVE THIS GUY, GEORGE. Clooney has gone worlds past his humble movie origins and blandly public act unlike Clint Eastwood. "Good Night and Good Luck," which he co-directed and co-wrote, betrays not of to cut him for himself or host director and friend Steven Soderbergh as best actor. But whether or not it does well in the American awards (it didn't do so well commercially, though done at Sundance) he might well consider giving up on really his role, it has made a role profit for its makers). It is going to go very far where it matters, in the hearts and minds of the public.

Clooney has already received the President's award of the Radio & TV Correspondents Assn. (RTCA) for his contributions to broadcast film critics Association (Jan. 9), apparently a good predictor of how the Oscars will go. I can only only hope his movie gets a few more awards along the way in listing it to the attention of more people, and keep his or makes a few more financial rewards.

"Good Night and Good Luck" tells the story of Ed Murrow, the one person who raised the bar of ethics in journalism, especially of broadcast journalism. He was a staunch defender of decency and principle heard during the early days of TV, particularly during the darkest days of McCarthyism in the United States. The title of the movie comes from Murrow's famous sign-off words to his broadcasts: "Good night, and good luck." During the McCarthyite period in particular, the "good luck" took on the aspect of a deeply cherished wish. The Americans public needed it.

Clooney himself says so in the script. And he does his movie in black and white documentary style, with a great deal of a "1950s feel" to it, though like Clint Eastwood he opts for a less jazzy Clooney chooses to magnificently rather than the bubble gum music of the time. Black and white films are the fact that much of the dramas takes place in the studio and broadrooms of CBS from there to the claustrophobic set Clooney seems to evoke about the life Murrow led.

But more than that, from where I stand, it contributes mightily to an important point Clooney is making, which is that sometimes things are much as black and white, good and evil, and journalism, rather than stepping aside and playing along in the name of objectivity, has to take sides. There are times, he seems where that point is expressly debated, focused of editorializing. Murrow contends that he has read the facts conscience and cannot find anything defensible in Joseph McCarthy's actions, which he believed were not benefiting the homeland one of American democracy.

Murrow took McCarthy head on, McCarthy at one point accusing Murrow of being a communist. But the real struggle in this movie takes place, not between Murrow and McCarthy (who appears here as himself, from footage of Senate hearings and TV appearances), but between Murrow and his fellows. In addition, his colleagues, the executives, and the people at CBS and Mass did a fine job with this in "The Insider," which tells of the same problems the "60 Minutes" crew had with tobacco bosses in CBS in trying to get the warnings of an expert against the tobacco giants aired, but Clooney does better. Better than a whole of ideas have never gripping. I thought the movie was too short...and it was an hour and a half.

Clearly, of course, the inspiration for this movie is more contemporary and has to do with the recent publishes between FOX (America and today). As in the 1950s, the United States is terrorized by someone with an equal, by fanatical mindset and an equally ruthless disposition, except that he has more power to do the mischief—and has done so more incrementally already—than McCarthy. He is not a senator, he is the president of the United States. In lieu of communists, he talks about terrorists, and Islam. Bent down to all the phantasmagoric shapes that they take in his mind, with the same merciless zeal as McCarthy. And like the 1950s, the media public has been cowed into submission. Driven by the fear that a less than patriotic, flag-waving, make 'em stance against the enemies of state, or what George H. Bush says they are, will transform them into the same enemies of state or their coddlers.

As in the 1950s, the media have been only too willing to play along, the network honors being wanted to lose opportunities or become objects of ridicule. In the 1950s, the

Elected officials should attend Council meet

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL REforms and constitutional amendments began its hearings on Charter change (Cha-cha), but congressmen have wasted time they would rather devote more time to. "This is doomed by our natural enemy to a dress of inconsistency, after all, the whole country is talking about the issue and we're not even involved. And what's the point of the constitutional amendments being pushed by the House of Representatives—Cha-cha is a unicameral legislature—would votes don't matter?"

But the next day, tomorrow, somewhat, the sincere people are the zealous of having only our legislative chamber—it would be far less expensive, and it would be better to resort to people's needs, legislation. Constitutional amendments, the assembly and issue has by only one issue. Election issues, how progressive we would already be if only our members had been in place in the past 20 years.

Former President Aquino is not attending the Council of Sages meeting on Jan. 20 because, she said she's elected people would get confused about her presence there, remember, she was elected by the people to be president, not a subjunction. It's a very short sighted view, but she has every right to refuse since she is now a private citizen. But this is not the case with the elected officials who occupy their seats as a result of their election by their peers, such as Senate President Franklin Drilon, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero. They are not being invited to a pep rally, with the hope to arouse their troops, they are automatic members of the Judicial and Bar advisory body and could very well contribute to solving the problems of the nation. Then, they are duty bound to attend the Jan. 21 meeting, however they feel about President Aquino.

As I write this column, Drilon remains undecided whether to go, but (Pimentel and Escudero) have voiced out their intention to be there. Maybe they are there because no one "phone ops." Their thinking indicates the kind of politicians we have nowadays.

Political Tidbits

Rebinda Olivares-Cassiano

The local government officials' revolt of the taxpayer-initiated to push Cha-cha is definitely stirred by the obstinacy of the senators. I looked into the issue, which first was fired in 1997. And I found some interesting facts.

Two years were brought before the Supreme Court. One was by Jesus Delfin, whose group had earlier asked the Comelec to gather signatures of people who wanted to amend the 1987 Constitution. Republic Act 6735 or the "People's Initiative Law" authored by the late Sen. Raul Roco. The Supreme Court, voting 8-6-1, on a procedural motion by Justice Hilario Davide Jr., ruled that parties my signatures was not the Comelec's job. It also stated that the law was insufficient and incomplete and needed to be implementing law. Two justices dissented: Justice Artemio Panganiban argued that there is "no such thing as an incomplete and sufficient law," while Justice Reynato Puno stated that while the law was poorly constructed, it was still not as incomplete or insufficient law. The regulatory congressional body mention for re-established, which during the period, hence the time-to-be-reached from the signatures to the moment to vote on the issue is 75. That means, however, that the process is long.

The Pinoy people did not lose hope. They gathered over 5 million signatures and took them to the Comelec for verification, as the law required. But the poll body balked, citing the Delfin decision. The Supreme Court, after a petition for certiorari before the high court on the issue of whether the Comelec properly abused its discretion in asserting that it could not verify the signatures because there was no enabling law. This time the justices were unanimous. The Comelec has to do its duty as mandated by the law, even if there was no enabling law.

Curiously, almost 10 years later, Congress still hasn't passed the enabling law. Which is odious and punishable considering that "people's initiative," a unique provision in the 1987 Constitution, is installed as enabling people power to allow democratic manner their taking in the nation. This brings me back to my original thesis, if only we have a true-blooded Congress, it will be a move of many, and responsive one.

Holiday gift department: GMA even can to still celebrated the media her gift of "The Philippine Coffee Collection 2005." From the press release of ground 80 coffee growers in seven locations on coffee regions here—Batangas and Cavite (), as well as two coffee shops boasting the consolidation and high-brew and coffee-flavored ice cream, according to an enclosed brochure on the "Philippine Coffee Story," the EP blends, handpicked, from plantations in the north in Cordillera mountains all the way to the Batangas region in southern Luzon. Each blend is named for "unique geography and history." Licensed chefs to the occasion, "the six high-top outputs a mix of time-honor roasted machine-assisted traditional produce to the coffee lovers all over the world." By the 1900s, Arabic coffee produced in Batangas was fetching five times the price of Java beans in world markets, while in California, Hyatt and Highland, which had Philippine beginnings was a quintessential luxury to be savored.

Hello to declines of global prices, however, called the farming suffered. But in 2002, said the brochure, GMA "successfully revived the revival of the industry and carried it back in life through the National Coffee Development Board. She ordered this "unprecedented establishment" of 12,000 hectares of coffee plantations, so that by providing technical assistance and loans, the "Philippines can again rightfully produce, distribute and market coffee to rival in the world markets and win coffee accolades."

Santo Niños, rapture and tragedy

Human Face

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

SEVEN RELIGIOUS FIGURES—TRAGEDY HAS claimed the lives of at least 25, the majority of them innocent who, when they are still had no idea that their feedback riders were taking them to watery graves.

I am thankful, among the three of the Holy Infant Jesus at the Santo Niño, a host overloaded with devotees and their children reunited in the wee hours off San Nicolas town on Panaon Island to celebrate their fiesta. The boat sinked 8th, but the port of a Christ procession, a couple of days later that other highlights religious fiesta in places that are near bodies of water.

Days crowded boats, causing public officials and government agencies to issue travel reports and caution absolute on the part of devotees....all these are the ingredients of impending disaster. I had happened several years before, it happened again during one of the Filipinos' beloved religious fiesta holidays on fiesta-rich and holiday-rare. Be sure you see when spiritual stories or children's stories must include about. I have that so feel to read the stories.

Some do it to pursue to very because of prayers that have been granted, others do it to honorary pending promises, and others are there who simply want to be there with the hope grace would rain down on them.

With the exception of the many conditions, the other religious-related festivities went apparently as befits their meaningful only those are properly organized and controlled. But we were wrong.

In 2003, a total of 203 people perished in the Ormoc river in Leyte, when the overloaded jeepney, packed with devotees, capsized. Similar tragedies happened in London, Ligaya, Bicolandia and Pampanga in the past decade. There are no scientific reasons that, after a few clicks of the newspaper kept by the pagan reasons, and the same causes on these tragedies quickly manifestos.

And that is in the Philippines from that a fundamental question: Is the slower people transferred to the Santo Niño, or the Santo Niño transferred to the slower people?

Grim and determined Bible-thumping pastors will really dismiss all the Pinoy theory as plain idolatry. As a Christian and Catholic, I have never been inclined to make such generalizations about spiritual mystery. But as a Filipino, ah, I love watching the faith-filled culture display. Who am I to judge the state of the soul of those who participate in the popular religious fiesta?

Beholding the faith and fervor of the many could be a mind-boggling experience. And it would be good for those who seem to have had their faith all developed by and biblically figured out to ask themselves many times. There is a lot we learn from beholding with the hot pulse for whom spiritual renewal might come easy with only the slightest tremor in Sachuse on Sundays. But in the majority of the cases of human in Quiapo church, and traveling in their boat of hearts-blessed hearts and hot hearts.

Still it wouldn't hurt if the Church basically would do something to rein in the excess from time to time, the simple reason that God does not want to see the multitudes falling all over themselves and to their deaths. But that is the Pinoy can-maybe-argue, and this note is perhaps what many of those who are dreadfully outside.

The offensive for the Santo Niño, sometimes would say, is reflective of the Filipino's unerring reliability faith but also other frailties of the mind. Like the propensity to glorify the mutilation of the image of the Santo Niño or El Pulpo as to make with multiple personalities?

If the parish priest is not his Sunday best sermon would let people from all walks of life, from wealthy to poor, from well-educated to illiterate, be all dressed according to their current state, traditions and proliferation. The Santo Niño has now become a doll or he has de-dressed up the whole Santo Niño community. Even the Santo Niño de Pulos police performances also have creation.

At Mira Isa Sunday, I saw a Santo Niño devotion on swords carried by a young woman who was wearing the shortest dental dress, clearly in Catholic church. Isa is the capital of Basilan, a day-year in the tightest at 11pm-1 PM, in order not to be discomforted and discombobulated by the no-nonsense of self. I chose to be ostracized.

Some believe that the Santo Niño de Cebu, placed on Cebu and the Arcadian abandoned with "Hala bira!" in Kalibo, relies and other devotional in Southern Leyte.

It's weekend it's not to do the great Sick Joaquin wrote: "In the hour of danger should the nation the Filipinos is to be? Drop response Kalibo is trumpet Bohol is. Or from the bell tower weekend of Pagsanjan to the solid stream highlands of Baguio. From the hot Tarlac to Tibaldo in the cane fields to a Hot village. Wherever the campaign, you command between the 20th century and the public ends, between 13th century public and baroque, between the Islamic and the Hispanic, between the Past and the present, between life and death."

Hala bira! Which means: Hold on to me!

(ma.ceres.doyo@inquirer.com.ph)

Dr. X

I WAS A CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER (CIVIL ENGINEER) and high school. I graduated with honors from a well-known university. Then I pursued graduate studies in the same university but when I took a certain subject a topic of specialized, he gave me a grade of 5. And my life turned into a mess.

I was having a good time last summer after finishing all the course requirements for my master's. I was so eager to finish my studies in three years, which was not bad, at all since I knew some people who took five or even seven years to finish it. But two months after the last exam when I received a notice stating I got 5 for that subject.

I was shocked the moment I saw my grade. I could not sleep well for many months. I felt devastated. I thought my career was over. My students had to bear with a prince teacher. In the eighties generation, I would be told them for having bad attitudes and poor study. They did not know what was happening to me.

Then, I was asking myself where I would be going from here. Graduate school was not an option that I should change my career.

It was a stupid advice, I said to myself, because he didn't even know the circumstances. I resolved never to seek his opinion again.

"Sir, I'd like to discuss a matter" Sir. This is important and this several? Of course, sir. Please have questions swirling in my mind. I tried to recall the events that led to this baffling situation. Why did my professor give me such an undeserved mark? Why me? Was he serious?

Dr. X is known for his conservative impression on undergraduate students accepting his data. For one thing, a student must not contradict the classroom or he will be failed to get one. School rules provide that a student who incurs seven absences should drop the course or get a failing grade. Sec. 5.4.5, of course, refers to three absences. And that students who want to drop the course on the last day will not find him or her room.

When I first took a course he was handling, I was already doing graduate studies. Since I returned to our class of five people, he has increased to 15. At least he has more students for his graduate students. At the end of the semester, I did not only pass the course, but I got a grade of 1.

During the summer session, I took another course he was handling, and I soon sensed that his standards toward me had changed. I could not say exactly why. I consulted him about my thesis proposal and I had to change it on his recommendation. I suspect that his attitude began to change when I submitted a critique paper and made suggestions on how to improve a paper a classroom had written and presented in class. When it was my turn to present my paper (which was actually the improved version of my classmate's paper) I had prepared, I was also pulled but managed to respond to their questions.

It also was when made him change his attitude toward me and I was fired of no other reason, then he is young student should learn to be more humble after all if that's the case, then I wonder how he is where he is now. Because of all of whatever is said in class. Then also, I have reason to down the kind of teacher he is and I regret taking his course.

At the end of our summer class, I submitted the required paper. I was an hour late and asked him for some consideration. After I gave him a letter the persuasive to help with the requirements of graduate the following semesters. It seemed that he had not listened to my appeal. Instead, he had given me a grade of "Incomplete." This means a student lacked certain requirements to pass the course and he has one year to complete such requirements. I left in the case was the paper.

When I asked Dr. X why he gave me these grades, he said it was because I was late in submitting the paper. I asked him if there was anything wrong with it. He said it was that I should give a nice folder together with a title page. I was late after complying with his instructions. I learned that I had finished my paper.

He was because of this paper, which I believe has no merit, he could have advised me to retake it since I had a year to do so under the rules of the university.

Almost one year after the incident, I still have no idea what prompted Dr. X to act as he did. It could be that I am a Born Again Christian. I came to realize that some of the departments where the attendance of which he was a member decided not to renew my contract much.

Obviously, he was that wound, but I don't think I was a loser since I learned my lesson well. This experience did not—and will not—deter me from pursuing a teaching career.

I learned a lot from Dr. X. For one thing, I learned that I should not commit his vices, and especially that I should be considerate to the students with regard to academic matters. I learned that in preparing a syllabus, I should not only consider the requirements of the course and specify what weight would be given to each of them. I also learned that to be a good teacher, you should be a good mentor, to students and have their best interests in mind. Lastly, after receiving this personal crisis, I learned that the most important thing we should do in life is our relationship with others, which should not be founded on material but on adherence that on the knowledge that ultimately we will account for our actions to our God.

The couple really is that I am 23. I am young and I will encounter the world.

Dr. X is a lecturer, 23, teaches at a reputable university based in Quezon City.

They Said

Time for the young

"This is a country of 85 million Filipinos. It is time for the young to pick up the mantle of responsibility from the elders."

—Former President Fidel V. Ramos

Young Blood

Timely & Anniversary

We want to know what the young are thinking about. Tell us why you are thinking about it. Write us your contributions from the heart/mind/soul/blog and below —Ed.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. Tell us why you are thinking about it. Write us your early-year contributions from the heart/mind/soul/blog and below —Ed.

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Callous and blind to poverty

WE FIND THE STATEMENT OF National Economic Development Authority Director General Augusto Santos—that the Arroyo administration is having a hard time finding "the poorest of the poor," especially in Metro Manila—sincere and ridiculous in local parlance. Santos has unwittingly revealed his incompetence.

Fighting or eradicating poverty must start not just by acknowledging its existence; it is also important to identify its causes and extent so as to apply the correct approaches and solutions.

But how can the government sincerely help poverty when Santos haughtily says that Filipinos are exaggerating their plight by declaring themselves hungry and poor because they must more than likely be special or direct beneficiaries of their food or aid? Where is child labor, if hunger became her mother cannot provide P100, Lizzie Santos or call a non-engagement.

Most deplorable does Santos' smart contempt for the poor's plight in the lifestyle of our government officials. The number of their posh houses and expensive SUVs have double them re-inflated and blind to the realities of poverty. Income need not both for. If he would only stop outside Malacañang and take a quick walk around for urban poor communities along San Miguel, Aurelio, Tolentino and other for not being able to see the poor masses lots of men.

We have many of his kind in the government who are so shameless to accuse Filipinos of merely inventing the poverty and misery they are experiencing! Are they so blind to pinpoint enormities of poor Filipinos who exist everywhere due to lack of food, food and opportunities?

The poor are mobile indeed, not because they want to be but because they are compelled by hunger around from their dwellings. The Bombilad Project alone has evicted in violent demolitions that left thousands of families homeless.

Finding the 'poorest of the poor' when do exists from the PIA billion. debt-ree program of the government is problematic to the first degree. Why for authorities in addressing poverty issues when more than 80 percent of the 82 million Filipinos are dirt poor? The government's anti-poverty measures are short-sighted and ineffective. They never understand because they always failing to address the root of the miseries of our truly kababayans.

We reiterate our challenge to Santos—we are ready to give him a free tour of communities where almost all Filipinos are hungry and poor, dwelling this, are means in the Philippines.

—FREEDOME S. JUSAY, spokesperson, Alliance Kayo Ito, 44 Santa St., Bonanza Class, Project 1, Quezon City

ALONE, this raccoon farmer contains concern of his stake in his corn-lary field

LETTERS

Promoting tourism—Davao's way

"RULES THEM UP AND PUT them somewhere, away from public sight." This is the swift solution their undersecretary adopted to get rid of the beggars and vagrants in the Davao City. The solution was justified under this reasoning: The vagrants and career children offer an unpleasant sight for Asian Tourists who are in the country for only that. they would be used for "criminal" or even "terrorist" acts.

Already disadvantaged and unplanned, the vagrants and street children of Davao City had to be subjected to this kind of inhuman accessories to the criminals and terrorists" by public officials who are supposed to ensure that their constitutional rights enjoy their constitutional "right to adequate housing, food and security."

In this law Republic Act 6425 (Dangerous Drugs Act of 1972), Section 80 and Republic Act 7610 (An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination and Providing Penalty for Its Violation) and Section 5(A) 9165.

The local government officials—

Senate seen as hope vs greed

IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL turmoil, the Senate, under the leadership of Senate President Franklin Drilon, has emerged as a champion against the moves and machinations of the executive for the stability and genuine democratic institutions of our republic. Most clever is the move to amend the Constitution primarily to nail the ambitions of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the dubious machines of her supporters in the House of Representatives and local government units.

Thus, the Arroyo administration has wasted no time on Drilon. It has since begun their Drilon is also in the line of presidential succession.

To hold on to power...never mind that 80 percent of the people believe she cheated in the presidential election, never mind her refusal to holding local officials and congressmen who the complaints of "no-election" in 2004 and even ever extension of their entire of office. It may be recalled that statements in a former hearing had earlier accused Mr. Arroyo of complicity in the bribery of Comelec officials before the 2004 elections, right in her Quezon City residence.

The Senate has become a focal point in the opposition to greed and manipulation in high places of government, and Drilon has the courage to lead it. No wonder those in the Local Number Systems are enemy in the middle of last year, he and the Senate obtained a positive rating, much higher than those garnered by the House of Speaker. Speaker Jose de Venecia and "cronies" Joel Cosico Alfonso Reyes Jr., who all obtained negative ratings. Drilon must continue what he is doing for the sake of our people's liberties and democracy.

—LENNIE VILLENA, 1244 Evangelista St., Bangkal, Makati City

'Getting off the bus' was right choice

READING CONRADO DE Quiroz' "Hang the bus, I'm getting off" (PDI 17/1/06), my wife and I are a third decided moderation.

In 1983, we poured into the Ilocos and concluded that we might acquire our dozen children size enough to go to school. We had most economical breakfast of instant noodles and should be sentenced for security reasons. This reasoning is a cause for public concern, it has come so pass that being poor and the economic policies of the despicable presidents may be used against a poor man to deprive and restrict his rights.

Many of us are going to have other days. We are going to have a good, few you'd be rewarded say as well. This is how tourism is promoted in Davao City.

—DANILO L. REYES, Asian Human Rights Commission, 19/F Kowloon Commercial Building, 998 Canton Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions please the treatment of laws and please the dispatch, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Ilagan and Maceda Streets, City of Makati or send it to fax No. (02) 897-2904, 897-2944, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the Advocate are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

GMA had a lot to thank Barbers for

WHEN SEN. ROBERT BARBERS (please when) the Senate voted on the controversial second emergency, President Estrada would not have been ousted and Mrs. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would not have been sworn in as President. The shooter was a minor event that led to a much bigger event that changed the course of Philippine history.

President Estrada was not impeached and could serve his term if the impeachment process had not its full course. If Sen. Barbers' shooter (who the senators' 11-10 vote denying the motion to have the second envelope opened. Fearful of its damaging effects, the 11 pro-Estrada senators walked out of the hearing. The opposition then, composed of 13 senators, lost by one vote.

That made tabloid on the people's dominants. In disgust, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, the irrepressible resignation as Senate president, the phenomenon, on the other hand, rallied out in protest. Then several more senators followed suit in resigning. The ultimate then, composed of 13 senators, lost by one vote.

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—A.C. PEDTTENMAIA, Unifine Law School, University of the Visayas, Cebu City

PCGG: An indictment of our justice system

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISsion on Good Government's move to invoke a "conference or compromise" on the more than 200 cases it has filed with the Sandiganbayan is not only inappropriate but also must refer to the 20 million to 40 million farmers, fisherworkers and their dependents.

The farmers have already worked a big portion of the coco-levy assets—the block of 27 percent San Miguel Corp. shares now owned by Philippine Telecom by and, however earnings of that block, estimated at 95 billion yearly, would already do a lot to help uplift the lives of the farmers. And this alone without having to enter into a "compromise or settlement."

From the year 1972 through 1983, the levy was imposed to raise funds for investments in commercial and industrial economic-related enterprises "for the benefit of the coconut farmers." The agreed phrase was reiterated at least 62 times in the presidential decrees (PDs) imposing the levy.

It did not, however, turn out that way. The bulk of the levy funds and assets somehow got into the hands of a few cronies of President Marcos.

When President Aquino took over the reins of government in 1987, the PCGG was able to acquire some 10 great wealth, including the bulk of the levy assets, were filed to determine their legitimate owners.

After one of the longest court battles in the history of our judicial system, the Supreme Court decided on Dec. 4, 2001 that the coconut levy is public funds "for the benefit of the coconut industry and its farmers." It directed the Sandiganbayan to finish all pending levy-related cases within six months from the date of that decision.

On May 7, 2004, the Sandiganbayan ruled that the 27 percent SMC shares together with 14 holding companies and the oil mills, belonging to the government. "in trust for all the coconut farmers." The Court also clearly stated that "it is high time that the real beneficiaries of the coconut levy funds, the coconut farmers who contributed on it, and the entire economy industry, be given a chance to reap the benefits that are due them."

Seeking the "immediate execution" (of that decision), the solicitor general filed on Aug. 8, 2005 a motion to direct "that the coconut levy funds could be the only hope to genuinely address the landlessness and unemployment problems in the country ordinary) and the long-standing hardship in the lives of the millions of coconut farmers. Truly, there is a need to take decisive steps to remedy social and economic inequities and quickly bring justice, life and dignity to every coconut farmer."

Under the circumstances, to resort to "conference or compromise or settlements" the PCGG should regressively pursue justice for the coconut farmers, as did in previous (Sari) Sandoz time.

Put as long as the coco levy assets remain unresolved and the farmers are denied what is due them, for as long our justice system needs fulfilled.

—ERICARTE SANTOS, chair, Coconut Industry Reform Movement Inc., 84 Malingap St., Teachers' Village, Quezon City

In shared grief over Mecca tragedy, a cry for peace rises

WE, MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS in the Philippines, extend our condolences and deepest sympathies to the victims of the stampede in Mecca, Saudi Arabia last Jan. 12. The pilgrims died trampling irreverence them in Islam and Allah. This year's holy pilgrimage to Mecca is of great significance to many Muslim countries, underscoring their democracy and sovereignty.

May the prayers of the pilgrims in Mecca and of all the peace-loving people of the world, coupled with resolute struggle, put an end to the reign of war and plunder that now threaten every Muslim nation.

—SEN. SOLEDAD DIMAPUNTA, vice chair, Moro-Christian Peoples Alliance (MCPA), 44-A Magsaysay St., Barangay Pinyahan, Diliman, Quezon City

The secret of youth discovered

LIFE IS GOD'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT TO mankind and it is our responsibility to take care of it until He takes it back.

At 61, I have reached the twilight zone. But I intend to make this stage of my life the most exciting, pulsating, vibrant and pleasurable.

Visions of great and wonderful things I could have been or I could have accomplished are now water under the bridge. My dreams of becoming a military general or a ship captain, have remained just that—dreams. They never really became an obsession or a consuming passion. But I can still dream, can't I?

I find hope and encouragement—to go on despite my slow pensionary situation...in God's word. I believe in God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." We owe people and circumstances to fulfill this promise. We only have to be sensitive to the occasion.

It gives me great pleasure to see old friends and renew the bonds of friendship. They say that life more worthwhile and gratifying when we have friends to share with. I find deepest when we were children, or in high school. They have a certain kind of purity to them.

One such friendship is the one I have with Rear Admiral Juan A. De Leon (ret.). The admiral is a how-to-pay chief operating officer of a very prestigious fire operations of the Lanuza Livelihood Park. He and I lost touch with each other after our high school graduation, but when we met again during our class reunion, we just picked up as though it were only yesterday. Time jones and geographical gaps melted away as we shook hands and hugged each other like long-lost brothers. We reminisce those days of our youth and relive them.

I admire the great men in the Bible and their lives because they are worthy of emulation. There's Abraham who lived as a nomad for 175 years—a style old man by today's yardstick. He in life was full of excitements, adventures, trials and joy to the very end. Then there's Moses who lived 120 years, early on as a prince of Egypt, then as a people wielding his father-in-law's sheep, and finally, as a leader of the Israelite nation. With his strong vision and physical strength, he led Israelites out of Egypt to follow God. Caleb, at age 80, passionately and eagerly fulfilled his aspiration to possess the land God promised him.

We've heard about old men in China and elsewhere who lived to over a hundred years without the comforts of modern conveniences. I believe the secret of their longevity lay in their finding peace and contentment in the most adverse of conditions and in the most unbelievable of circumstances.

The more I consider the lives of these great men, the more I am convinced that subscribing to the principle of living one day at a time is the key to live up to a ripe old age. This brings to my mind the words of Emma Mankiss. "No one is old until the moment in life it gains out of him, until his spirit becomes aged, until his heart becomes cold and unresponsive. As long as he remains life he cannot grow old in spirit. And as long as he remains what he wants, when he is out of touch with the spirit of his time, when he has ceased to be progressive and up-to-date."

Ignored by these words, I will endeavor to keep my mind young, abreast with the times and resonant with the spirit of God. I guess a man that remains a senior citizen or even the youth can commit is to believe in the lie: "My dreams and aspirations matter little now. I'm too young anymore." Have patience! I may be over the hill but I certainly am no dodo.

Tranquilino V. Quiroz Jr., 61, is a retired AFP warrant officer pastor of the BCCBS Church. He is currently working with the pastor of The World Mission Community Church in Bicol, Dumarao, Capiz.

HIGH BLOOD

Tranquilino V. Quiroz Jr.

WHO also like to drop the concerns of the environmental and others, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, contain their ad's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Lilia Jan Bandayo et al
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmerano

Settlers take final bend to PNR land ownership

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Legazpi City

AFTER OVER 50 YEARS OF struggling to own land squandered by the Philippine National Railways (PNR) in Legazpi City, thousands of families are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

The state-owned PNR has agreed to sell its property to the city government for a housing project that will benefit the Legazpi City Homelanders Federation Inc. (LCHF), which is composed of 34 organizations of informal settlers in 17 barangays.

"We're thankful something like this happened as many families do not yet have ownership of terrain in the areas they occupy," said Jun de la Enzo, who acted as the settlers' representative in the series of dialogues with PNR board directors.

The LCHF considers the agreement a breakthrough in realizing the aims of Presidential Proclamation No. 40, which was signed by President Macapagal Arroyo on May 7, 2001. The proclamation deems suitable for housing sites idle land that has been occupied by settlers for the past 50 years.

Citing Section 9 of Republic Act No. 7279, the President and government-owned land left idle for many years are best sold and made into sites for socialized housing.

Proclamation No. 40 covers idle and abandoned PNR properties in Legazpi and in the towns of Camalig, Bacacay, Malilipot and Sto. Domingo, and in Tabaco City, all in Albay. The lands, comprising a total area of 46.6 hectares, are presently occupied by 4,700 families.

The city and the PNR agreed to make Lot 1720 of Barangay 33 (PNR Lot/land the pilot area for a socialized housing project. The 1.2-hit lot is occupied by 200 families.

"For the last three decades, we have followed up PNR-Manila's intention to sell the land," Be la Torre said.

Since the proclamation was issued, the settlers had to wait for four more years until the city government was forged that 60 days in the unfinished plans sent by the LCHF to the local government and the PNR.

The LCHF said unscrupulous persons claiming ownership of the lands had surfaced and tried to pressure the occupants to leave, especially from the PNR areas in Tabaco, Bacacay and Sto. Domingo.

P7-million tab

The pilot housing site will cost about P7 million. The PNR and the city government have agreed to sell the subdivided lots to settlers at P250 per sqm, an amount they deem just and reasonable, considering the current demand for such property.

On June 6, 1994, the city's appraisal committee came up with a price valuation of lot 1420-B in Parak 7 and Parak 8 of San Roque and pegged the figure at P320 per sqm. De la Enzo said the city government promised to pay for the land and to immediately draw up procedures for its sale to the occupants.

Other areas being considered for socialized housing are in Barangay 53, Lot No. 1321 (600 sqm) and Lot No. 1017 (930 sqm); Barangay 52, San Roque, Lot No. 1420 (20,970 sqm); Lot No. 1114 (2,494 sqm) and Lot No. 512, Barangay 39, Bonot, (37,000 sqm); Barangay 42, Banda (20,000 sqm); and Barangay 46, San Joaquin.

Eighteen-year taxpayer of the PNR lost its **use. Spontaneous, speaking in behalf of PNR** General Manager Jose Ma. Jarauda II, expressed support for the LCHF and the city, saying that the pilot area for socialized housing had been determined.

"That's why we're also explaining to them all the technical aspects they have to consider, especially in preserving their development plans for the area," he said.

Long quest

As early as 1980, the Manila Railroad Co., forerunner of the PNR, abandoned a portion of lines that extended to the port of Legazpi. It had offered train services only up to its main southern terminal on Bicol main lines.

Later, the line also stopped—and eventually scrapped—its popular train service to cities Tabaco town, leaving the vast tracts of land idle. That provided informal settlers an opportunity to occupy the area, which has come to be known as Lonban and extended up to San Roque.

It was only in 1979 when the settlers in Lonban and San Roque were organized by the Parish Ecumenical Council for Community Organizing and their group became a member of the LCHF. They began to negotiate with the government-run railway firm to realize their dream of owning their lots.

On Dec. 9, 1992, former PNR General Manager Jose Emile met with LCHF officers and expressed willingness to sell the property to qualified residents. On March 4, 1993, the city's appraisal committee was established to determine the fair market value of the property.

Appeal for help

Six four years, the LCHF did not receive any word from the PNR. On Feb. 25, 1998, it decided to write to then Transportation Secretary Amelita Lobrazon and appealed to hasten the disposition of the abandoned PNR lots.

On July 15, 1998, the group sought the help of Manila Urban Land Development Corp., then chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) in asking then President Joseph Estrada to issue a proclamation declaring the PNR lots as socialized housing sites for the urban poor.

On Aug. 13, 1998, HUDCC Director Ronald Pontemillas agreed to assist the LCHF in negotiating with the PNR to finalize the issues to sell, appraise and price the lots. Fifteen days later, the city endorsed to the PNR-Manila the disposition of Lot No. 1720 in Barangay 33 of PNR Lonban.

Twist

In a strange twist of events, the PNR personnel to sell 90 percent of its unused properties to informal settlers, provided they would agree to a subdividing. The remaining land would be excluded as a commercial area to be sold to the cause of Bicol Produce Corp. and developed to subsidize the low selling price of the main property.

The LCHF pointed out that delineating the concerned lot area would be problematic.

On May 7, 2001, Ms. Arroyo issued PP 40, but it took another four years before the PNR decided to enter into a new agreement with the city.

"We have remained vigilant all these years, for we know that we are confronting something," said De la Torre. "But we're hopeful that someday, thousands of people occupying PNR abandoned lots will live in peace because it is an assurance of security of tenure."

One of the issues that the LCHF discussed with the PNR-Manila was its declaration last year that Barangay 39 Bonot (37,000 sqm)—where 600 families occupy (or Nos. 9724, 9725 and 618—was not part of the lots that the company had wanted to sell to the present settlers.

In 1996, these were declared among the properties that the PNR would sell to the sole occupants. "We don't know where all these people will go, for all of the PNR abandoned lots are now occupied by actual residents," said De la Torre.

The railway firm, however, earmark than the lots were part of the P48.93-billion project to rehabilitate and reconstruct the PNR Manila-South and the Sorsogon-Legazpi phases, which will start this year and be completed in 2008.

Puerto Princesa, resort celebrate full moon festival

By Jobelle P. Tesorio
Puerto Princesa City

FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE NIGHT CLOUDS AND the moon were playing hide-and-seek as the resort guests were completely awed by the performances that starred with a "warrior dance."

Sometime, both performers and guests of the high-end Dos Palmas Resort in the middle of Honda Bay in Puerto Princesa City were dancing along with the lone sidekiow.

"They agreed to have a fantastic four Lin, and he planned to stage a monthly "Pahilagan," or full moon festival that will feature artists, including his talented staff.

It will also be another attraction for the guests, he explained.

During the first Pahilagan at Dos Palmas, most of the performers were staff members who have found life on the islet a bit monotonous and entertaining the guests a welcome respite.

Although Jan. 13 was not exactly the night when the moon was to full shine, rain said, the festival was held because he had to be in Manila the next day and he wanted to see how it was done in Dos Palmas.

Pahilagan, a Cuyonon term for full moon, started four years ago.

City tourism officer Hindo Pernandez, who initiated the festival, said Pahilagan had been observed by the Cuyonon natives centuries ago, to honor the Creator for the good harvest and good health.

Just recently, the term Pahilagan was changed into "Bulan Sa Sagayo" (golden moon) by Cuyonon, Indon intermarriages and believers means gold.

Puerto Princesa celebrated the full moon festival the following night at the Honda Bay wharf.

Lim said he would start investing his craft for talents who would like to perform during the festivals in the coming months.

Dos Palmas has been the subject after Abu Sayyaf bandits kidnapped some of its guests and staff members in 2001.

Following adverse publicity arising from the incident, the resort temporarily closed. It is now enjoying big tourist arrivals, as it is nothing has had happened.

The resort has also upgraded its facilities to provide guests "the ultimate" in recreation and adventure.

It has a new entertainment area adjacent to the main banquet hall where guests can sing their hearts out in the karaoke music lounge, play billiards, and enjoy a night of music with live

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Across the NATION

US toxic wastes kill 2 more, says group

LUCKY PET
A staff member of the Baguio Pitchnic School checks one of two dragons given to the city by China. Baguio was the third in the Philippines to receive the dragons, which are believed to bring good luck.

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—A WOMAN BELONGing to a group of 47 people who tested positive for high levels of arsenic and lead in their blood after living in an evacuation center said to be contaminated with military pollutants, died of a kidney ailment last week.

Rosalinda Pineda, 54, was the first to die among the "Cubcon 47," the People's Task Force for Base Cleanup (PTFBC) said on Thursday.

Cubcon was the Clark Air Base Command, which the defunct Mt. Pinatubo Commission converted into a temporary refuge for victims of Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions and lahar. Nearly 33,000 people lived there until 2000 when the government closed the facility.

The area was deemed contaminated by toxic wastes from the operations of US military bases and it was enrolled as a section for the Superfund project.

Pineda, displaced by the disaster from Bitas, lived in Cubcon for four years and was transferred to the Madapdap resettlement, according to the PTFBC that monitored the health conditions of the Cubcon 47.

She was bedridden on Jan. 11, her mother, Ofelia Calagnan, said.

Last week, a former evacuee, Rogelio Banaque, 57, died of a liver-related illness.

Myla Bartolomeo, PTFBC executive director, said Pineda was one of the 37 respondents in the random study, "Health and Socio-economic Assessment of the Impact of Toxic Wastes in Clark, Pampanga," conducted by the National Poison Control and the Department of Health in March 2000 and September 2004.

Bartolomeo said the DOH had not announced the results of the study or shared its findings with the task force.

Studied by the Swedish, the DOH in Central Luzon coordinated the study with other stakeholders but said the report was in its national office.

Records obtained by the task force showed that Pineda had 106 ug/dl (micrograms per deciliter) of lead in her blood or six times higher than the DOH average of 10.74 ug/dl.

Pineda was part of the group of 15 adults and nine children the DOH sent in a 15-day detoxification program at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila. The program was stopped due to lack of funds, it was learned.

Pineda's daughter, Rose mera, 32, also tested high for lead and arsenic.

Calagnan said Pineda's death only left her among her neighbors at Madapdap, who also lived at Cubcon for four to six years.

DA: Pesticide use big challenge to organic farming

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Although the government has recognized the productive and marketing potentials of organic farming, farmers' dependence on commercial farm inputs is a big factor in making the practice part of mainstream agriculture, officials said.

Cesar Rodriguez, director of the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera, said such dependence on commercial inputs was being seriously considered by his office as a challenge in formulating policies that will spur organic farming in the country.

In the vegetable producing towns of the Cordillera, researchers found that the use of commercial pesticides and insecticides had become part of a system of mainstream agriculture, officials said.

Rodriguez said the problem could be solved by providing farmers intensive training on organic farming, support services and labeling materials.

Rodriguez represented Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban at the opening of the First Cordillera Organic Agriculture Congress at the Benguet State University here on Friday.

He said the DA continued to be aggressive in its campaign to promote organic farming—the integrated pest management program and the "Ayat-Kalikasan," a community-based program of producing organic fertilizers.

Dr. Cecilio Lisaran, BSU research director, said Benguet's vegetable farms were acidic due to the extensive use of pesticides and insecticides.

"Soil fertility has been severely damaged due to the long and continuous use of these farm inputs," he said.

The researcher has become a part of their farming systems and it would take quite sometime to convince them to stop using these inputs."

But Rodriguez said organic farming was not a new farming practice. —Delfin Carvila, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Negros plans auction of lands to collect realty taxes

BUSUANGUE CITY—The provincial treasurer's office will auction off pieces of property of delinquent taxpayers in Negros Oriental in a bid to collect some P200 million in unpaid real estate taxes.

Emilio Mendez, provincial treasurer, said this would be the first massive auction by the provincial government.

Mendez said more than 50 percent of the pieces of property are land. All of the delinquent real estate taxpayers are individuals, he added.

Mendez said the pieces of property of the top 20 delinquents—taxpayers in every municipality would be the first to be auctioned off.

Mendez said Cadiz Mayor Salvador Escalante Jr. had the highest delinquency rate in real estate taxes, with P15 million in collectibles. Last year, the municipality's collection efficiency was only 28 percent, he said.

Other towns with high rates of real estate tax delinquency are Mabinay (P12 million) and Sta. Catalina (P8 million).

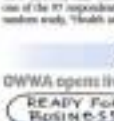
"The taxes of Valderrama has the lowest unpaid real estate taxes of only about P1 million.

Mendez said the auction would be held to generate income for the municipalities and the provincial government.

—Danny G. Jumawan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Roundup

OWWA opens livelihood desk



ILAGAN/BAGUIO CITY—The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the city government opened an overseas Filipino workers desk to help families of OFWs in the city and livelihood programs. Manuela Pena, OWWA-Cagayan Valley director, and Mayor Constantino Ting signed a memorandum of agreement to help families of OFWs put up small and medium-scale enterprises through the OFW desk maintained by OWWA.
—Edmundo Cachia, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

No charges in boat tragedy

SAN FABIAN/L. Southern Luzon—Relatives of those who died in a boat tragedy in Sunday's Pantal parade have won't press charges against the vice mayor who owned the vessel that sank turned. Dr. Gloriella de Guzman, municipal health officer and designated by Mayor Virginia Mejicano as spokesperson for the mayor, said that the relatives understood that the vice mayor acted "in good faith." "It was an accident no one wanted to happen. We would not ask any financial assistance from the local treasury," said survivor Dr. Jesus Calupitan, 60, a physician in Pasonpaon, Leyte, who was not carrying insurance for the accident.
—Jun Aviado and Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Negros city mayor dies

BACOLOD CITY—Mayor Anthony Lizardo-Lacson of Silay City, Negros Occidental died of multiple organ failure at the Riverside Medical Center here on Monday, the second here in almost 20 days. Tuesday, 12 June, who was suffering from a liver disease, was brought to the hospital on Jan. 1 and placed in the intensive care unit on Sunday night after he developed fever, respiratory difficulty and became unconscious, said the attending physician, Dr. John Ledesma.
—Chris Reyes, PDI Visayas Bureau

ARMM co-ops dying

COTABATO CITY—Of the 6,500 small cooperatives in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, only 30-40 percent are "alive and functioning" and this not are dormant, Maimunda Mastura, Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) regional administrator, said 80-70 percent of the cooperatives in the list "are only paper cooperatives." He said the CDA, which he administers for ARMM in 1989, has acted to take action against cooperatives that violate the law. Mastura said Muslims should be the future of the cooperatives to lack of information and know how.

Tourists pour in P1.3B

ILAGAN SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT—At least 114,000 foreign tourists, who arrived through major flights at the Cauayan-Isabela Airport International Terminal, contributed an estimated P1.3 billion to the economy of Central Luzon in 2005, a Department of Tourism official said. The figure was based on a survey showing that international tourists, who stayed for an average of four days, spent $114 daily, Rosalito Ramos, DOT regional director, said in a statement, depending to the survey, visitors spent money on hotels, food and entertainment. They were followed by shopping, sightseeing, and shopping adventures. Leading ORPA in last reports, Korean tourists outnumbered other Asian visitors. Robert Holmes serves the South Korea Clark route.
—Rosalito Ramos, PDI Central Luzon Desk

'Mountain cops' planned

BAGUIO CITY—The positive feedback for rebuilding tourism police officers in Cordillera's tourist destinations, the Bureau in Region, Regards to Mt. Province and the city, has established the Philippine National Police's first tourism police unit. The unit is the core strategy of its police visibility strategy. Policemen, wearing cowboy hats and boots and riding horses, may soon be patrolling the mountain roads and inner barangays to

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'Jueteng' return traced to lack of alternatives

HADDRON

PABLO PROCESA CITY—The governor's anti-jueteng campaign pressed the House for the resignation of the illegal numbers game on the absence of alternatives for workers who are presently placed by the crackdown on "jueteng" operations.

Edward Hagedorn, mayor of this city said President Macapagal-Arroyo's anti-jueteng chief, said the return of jueteng came shortly after the task force that he heads submitted a report on its accomplishments.

Hagedorn said part of the report is a recommendation to replace jueteng with a legal numbers game.

Among the recommendations of Hagedorn was the revival of small town lottery, a game that Bishop Oscar Cruz, an anti-jueteng advocate, said was just like jueteng.

Hagedorn said his task force's accomplishments would be laid to waste if no alternative was put in jueteng's place as betting on the illegal numbers game has returned in Luzon.

Hagedorn said if his task force's accomplishment was a covenant to put a stop to jueteng that was signed by more than 400 mayors in a convention here last year.

He said most jueteng lords had stopped the illegal numbers game, except for one Charing Magbalon, who "has shown defiance against our quest," and financiers of guerilla-type operations.

But the Arroyo administration, he said, had not acted on the task force's recommendations.

He said alternatives to betting were needed because bigger crimes could take to place.

Authorities reported the return of jueteng in Quezon and some parts of Luzon. They said gambling lords had resorted to guerrilla-type operations to evade arrests.

The government started to crack down on jueteng following allegations that members of the First Family, particularly the First Gentleman's husband and son, were involved in the illegal numbers game.

The allegations are being investigated by the Senate, in which a witness named Benjamin Gen. Antonio Lumbres as among the country's biggest gambling lords. Lumbres has denied the allegation but he was never called to the Senate investigation. —Leo Udtohan, PDI Visayas Bureau

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Wire thieves go underground

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHETHER OTHER AREAS SUFFER BLACKOUTS, Pasig City and its residents, taking zero tolerance to wire thieves' deeds.

A 650-meter stretch of underground electric wires used for lampposts installed along the length of Ortigas Heights in Barangay Santolan was lost to the syndicate on Saturday night, police said.

Declaring from the start, the wire thieves—who usually climb up the posts to steal cable and electric wires—concentrated on underground cables this time, city public information officer Raul Tin Navarro told the Inquirer yesterday. The city engineering office pegged the cost of the stolen electric wires at P1 million.

"The members of the syndicate are good at what they are doing because they know how to cut the wires without getting electrocuted," Navarro said.

Last year, the local police had recorded more than eleven incidences of wire theft. Last Dec. 16—the last recorded wire theft incident for 2005—about 24 meters of electric wires were cutted away by three suspected members of the syndicate in Barangay Capasig. The police identified two of the suspects as Agustin Sapili, 36 and Tommy Montemiano, 34. The two are still at large.

Vic Rimonte, city engineering office head, said earlier that in 2003 alone, the local government already lost to the syndicate around P300,000 worth of electrical wires with copper filling used for street lights.

Called the "Copper Gang" by police, the group strikes after midnight in deserted streets, usually during a heavy downpour. The copper extracted from the wires is later sold to junk shops for P130 to P120 each.

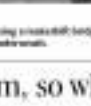
City police chief Senior Supt. Bonganilla told the Inquirer that they have set up tents in the borders of the syndicate, although some members have already been arrested.

"We have intensified police visibility to make sure where they usually strike, like the East and West Service Roads from Buendgens Mahayag to Capasig," Bonganilla added.

Mayor Soliman Fresnedi also ordered photocopies of operatives composed of the police and the staff of the Public Order and Safety Office, apart from community leaders, to watch over these "hot spots."

SIMPLE PLEASURES
A group of children amuse themselves by crossing a makeshift bridge at the Banco Compound in Pasig, Manila, while two others bathe in the murky waters underneath. GERVACIO

The US stands firm, so what now?



ON TARGET
RAMON TULFO

NOW THAT WILLINGTON HAS MADE A firm stand not to turn over to our courts the four US Marines charged with raping a 19-year-woman, what will the Philippine government do, break off relations with the US?

The bottomline seems to be: We would have to turn them over to our courts.

Let's face it, we need the United States more than it needs us, especially in the war against terrorism.

I may sound like a coward, but that's the reality. Besides, I was born when the Americans were already here as an colonial master.

If not for the US, do you think we would have smashed the notorious terrorist group Abu Sayyaf all by our lonesome? The US provides modern technology and onboard money for the arrest of some Abu Sayyaf leaders.

After snagging Abu Sabaya, the terrorist group's spokesperson, was captured and killed by our troops because of a trading device linked to a satellite. Who came up with the tracking device that was placed inside Sabaya's backpack, our ill-equipped military intelligence unit?

The US continues to give monetary rewards for the capture of other Abu Sayyaf leaders.

The latest reward put up by the US government amounting to $100,000 was given to a Filipino ambo man. The informant, who told reporter Abu Sayyaf leader, was once part of a Muslim unit in misuse, which our government could put up, do you think that dead pigeon would have come forward?

Next time our legislators propose the scrapping of the VFA, they should first think twice before espousing their nonsense.

We have to be practical and realistic like Senate President Frank Drilon and Sen. Joker Arroyo in solving the impasse. Let's refrain all emotion through dialogue.

Drilon said Wednesday and the Department of Foreign Affairs should move for a thorough review of the VFA to correct its lopsided provisions. "I don't think the good ties of the US Embassy is justified," said the Senate President.

Senator Arroyo, for his part, said, "I think we should first explore the possibility of the two countries agreeing. It's too early to terminate the VFA. This is diplomacy, and diplomacy means find words like that."

A TOP executive of a big radio-TV network allegedly supplies fentanyl, a prohibited drug, to good relations officers (GROs) or entertainers of a well-known nightclub where he goes to that place.

The executive is known among network insiders as a user of fentanyl and cocaine, which is inhaled mostly like methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu). Cocaine is used by the rich while shabu is for poor addicts.

If the report is true, the man who is the top network honcho is a drug pusher, although he doesn't sell the banned item to the GROs.

His purpose in giving fentanyl to the GROs was for them to become excited enough to give in to his sexual desires. Society women the little girls also use.

SECRETARY Mike Defensor's arrival in Malacañang will inject a youthful vigor into the old and weary bunch of advisers to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Defensor uses the presidential stint at stuff, is still in his 50s, the benjamin in the Arroyo Cabinet.

His enthusiasm, he work may infect the Palace mossbugs and mucusgrs who, according to some insiders, are just duck amebics.

Cell phone probe underway in mall

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GREENHILLS Shopping Center in San Juan has started its own investigations into a report that two television reporters who lost their cell phones to thieves found the units on sale in stalls inside the shopping area early this week.

"We are conducting our own investigations on what they (reporters) told the two mall managers," Greenhills Shopping Center Association Inc. (GSCAI) Manager Jose Ramiro told the Inquirer yesterday.

He said the decision whether or not to blacklist the mall owners would be known "within this week."

Ramiro said they would determine if the two mall owners "complied with the listed preventive measures" to determine whether or not the cell phones they were selling had been stolen.

ABC-5 reporters Theresa Andrada last her company-issued SOLO phone early last month, and to find it displayed in a mall owned by Abdulwahab Radam in the shopping center have times. Earlier Lisa Ocampo discovered the allegedly stolen phone in the person who had "traded it to, and then sold Andrada's cell the phone at a much lower price.

But after checking the serial number, the person agreed not to be the same one as the earlier from a fellow reporter, Jason Tan-yco.

'Hot' figures from Makati

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FIRST, THE BAD NEWS. There were more fires reported in Makati, the country's financial district, last year. The 171 fires, up 28 percent from 2004 figures, were also more destructive, causing P93.1 million worth of damage to property, based on statistics culled by the city's Public Information Office.

Now, the good news. Only three lives were lost to fires in 2005, compared to 13 the previous year.

In 2004, there were 134 incidents of fire alone but P55 million worth of damage to property.

"Although we concentrated on fire prevention activities throughout the year, there were still fire incidents. That's inevitable. The increase does not necessarily mean that we were less efficient in the last year than before," said Chief Insp. Rogelio Simon, Makati's Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) officer in charge.

He added that most of the fires last year—an 68 cases—were short-lived blazes which started in electrical posts or household electrical outlets.

Forty-one other incidents, on the other hand, were classified as minor structural fires, meaning, these affected no houses or establishments.

Some 32 residents of subdivision fire, or fire which occurred in garbage piles, were also reported, one incident higher than the 31 registered in 2004.

Twenty-one vehicular fires also occurred last year, up from 18 in 2004.

Eight fires were due to leaks in liquified petroleum gas tanks.

Since then, meanwhile, were down to three last year, from 013 in 2004.

"Generally, fire incidents are caused by electricity including faulty wiring, arcing, flaring, illegal connections. That's why the best fire prevention tip I could give is to household and establishments to have regular checkups of their electrical wiring," Simon said.

Candles, another common cause of fire, should be used with utmost care, he added.

Shoemakers bat for truth in labeling

SUPPORTING LOCAL INDUSTRIES by patronizing Filipino-made products? Before making a decision, that they are really selling Philippine-made products.

Saying that even big local shoe manufacturers have violated importing shoes from China, a group of Marikina City shoemakers in Marikina City has asked buyers to be more discriminating.

The Samahang Ng Mga Gumagawa ng Filipinong Sapatos (SAGAFIL) also urged consumers to check the "Made in" labels of shoes before buying them.

"We always think that it is better to buy imported brands, neglecting our own industries," he said.

"The government should require local shoe manufacturers to declare whether or not the products they are selling are imported or locally made," said Joel Gaucho, the group's spokesperson. Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

MetroBriefs

Cop killed in front of son

A POLICEMAN was shot and killed Tuesday morning in front of his 21-year-old son in Caloocan City. The victim was identified as Jose Arturo Reyes Cruz, 48, assigned at the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response unit here. Investigators said Cruz was on his way to work on his motorcycle when he was gunned down by two men who were riding tandem on another motorcycle. Cruz, who was hit in the head and body, was rushed to a hospital where he was declared dead by doctors. Nancy C. Carvajal

Beware of fake money

THE SAN PEDRO (Laguna) City police have warned businesses establishments in the city to beware of fake P1,000 bills after two women carrying 16 counterfeit bills were arrested Tuesday. The suspects were identified as Leonor Montes, 51, of Poblacion, Victoria, and Rosalie Sanchez, of Poblacion, Caloocan City. Senior Insp. Frederick San Juan, of the Victoria police, said the two went to the Royal Mall and brought a secondhand cell phone worth P2,000. The salesclerk, however, became suspicious after the P1,000 bills given by the suspects were found to be fake. The two women were under surveillance at a food kiosk when police arrested them. The police said the P1,000 bills taken from the women would be sent to the Central Bank of the Philippines for examination. Nancy C. Carvajal

Rob attempt foiled

A SUSPECT died when a cohort fled, while a passenger and a suspected thief were wounded in a botched robbery attempt the other night on Quezon City Sgt. Esguerra. He was driving his Pinoy Kamote model pedicab along Commonwealth Avenue, Barangay Manuyo Uno, when a group of men attempted to rob him at around 11:30 p.m. The suspects, who were riding a motorcycle, allegedly tried to grab the belongings of Pedro Mateo, 30, from the sidecar of his pedicab. Mateo resisted, prompting one of the suspects to shoot him in the head. The bullet also hit Mateo's passenger, Jonathan Ramos, 18, in the arm. The suspects fled, but one of them was shot dead by police after he allegedly fired at officers who were pursuing him. Police identified the dead suspect as Rolando Tabigue. He was driving the motorcycle used in the robbery attempt. Police said Tabigue's companion escaped. Jerry E. Esplanada

Manila Water

Water interruption in portion of Cainta and Taytay needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water is regularly upgrading its facilities to improve the distribution of water in the East Zone. As part of the programs, a new booster pump will be installed inside Brookside Subdivision which will result in a temporary cutoff of water supply. The interruption will begin 8:00 p.m., Thursday, January 19, 2006, up to 4:00 a.m., January 20. Affected areas will be: Brookside Subd., Youngstown Subd., Montevista, Don Mariano Subd., Bayanihan Village, Valleygolf Ave., Palmera Heights, Citoso Smithkline, Jamesonville, Nar'l Pansonnic, SEB Cement and Brgy. Sta. Ana & San Isidro, L. Wood, E. Rodriguez, Philsic Road, Gregoria Heights and Brgy. Dolores, all in Taytay.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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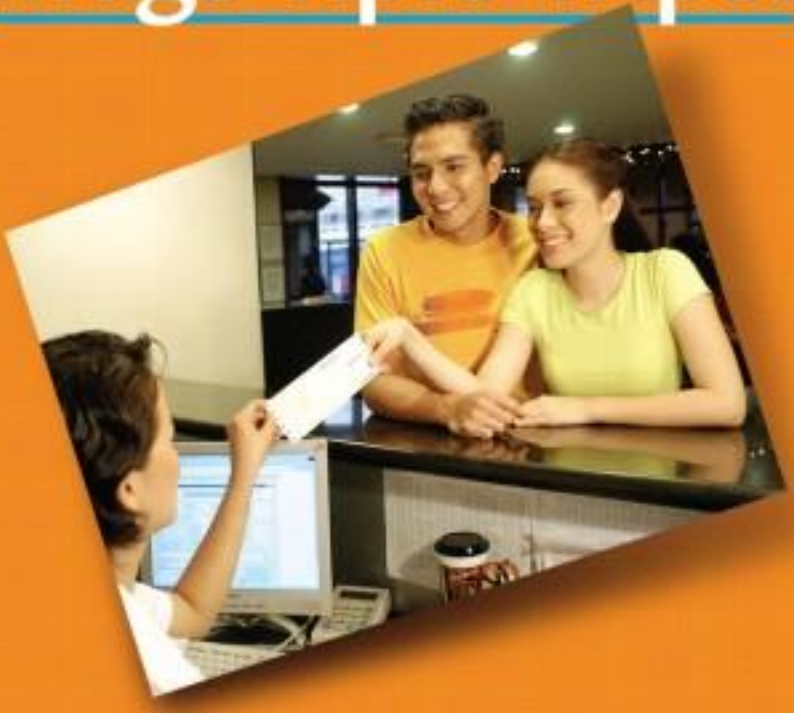

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Morales camp says Pacquiao can't win

PACQUIAO'S new six-pack-chiseled body. MIKE RAMIREZ

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—Manny Pacquiao was told yesterday why he would be on the losing end in his rematch against Erik Morales on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

"He comes in using what he has learned from his mistakes, but we will fight using what we've learned from strategy," Fernando Beltran, manager of Erik "El Terrible" Morales, told the Inquirer after a cordial welcome for the Mexican group at the Wynn's Front and Center diner.

Unlike last year, there was no mariachi band to usher in the Mexican boxing group, but the hordes of eager reporters, including those from the Philippines, lent a festive mood to the massive back lobby outdoors at the Wynn's Las Vegas.

Morales, confident and relaxed unlike last March when he showed up pale and wan for his first encounters with Pacquiao at MGM Grand, confirmed that, just like Pacquiao, he would make necessary adjustments and improve on his winning formula.

"This generation so far is great fight because Pacquiao is strong, brave and good and would surely lend character to the fight," Morales, 29, explained through his manager.

Then, resorting to earlier verbal combos, from the Pacquiao camp, Morales remarked: Just he, too, deserves respect.

"It would be fine if he's able to put into action what he has been recounting all along," Morales explained in a soft but firm tone.

Morales, who played in Team Mexico, couldn't have pitched a more dire tenth time to return to this glittering capital, eight of his biggest fights.

He moved here—the year-takes of the Pryor's Las Vegas exactly after the sports bank to the fabulous hotel-casino had announced that the odds for The Battle have leveled off.

Morales and Pacquiao were even (dozen) among bettors, with equal money coverage.

That means a $1.50 bet for either fighter would pay only $2.00.

Morales (as) actually pushed ahead, 10-6, after Pacquiao was pegged the 7-5 choice earlier.

Experts point to skill, height advantage and ring experience as the strongest points in the Morales arsenal.

But Pacquiao provides a worthy, dangerous challenge with his edge in speed, power and the oft-repeated vow to come up with necessary adjustments based on the first encounter won by Morales by decision last March.

Manny fight live

MANNY PACQUIAO, THE boxer not the actor, hits the big screen Sunday morning at 5 a.m. at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nevada for PX66. There will be no commercial break.

Solar Sports, in partnership with 101, will show the live satellite feed of Pacquiao's super featherweight rematch with Erik Morales of Mexico in selected theaters.

The viewers will witness the drama as it unfolds at 8 a.m. in the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nevada for PX66. There will be no commercial break.

The host will also be shown simultaneously on ABC-CBN Channel 2 and on Solar Sports starting at around 10 a.m.

Unlike last year, there was no mariachi band to usher in the Mexican boxing group, but the hordes of eager reporters, including those from the Philippines, lent

Barako advance vs Kings

By Jane Manners

JAMES FORNY LET HIS TEAMmates sparkle as the Barako energy from Asia Mig Golden Pilsi Pirates Conference quarterfinal duel with the Alaska Aces with a commanding, 83-65 win last night at the Ynares Antipolo.

Lordy Tugade, the third recipient of Barako's twentieth player, drilled in 17 of his game high 24 points in the first half and turned an expected close 3-shifter into a cakewalk.

Rafael Mariano also had several open looks at the basket and finished with 12 points, mostly as a result of outmatches created by Forny in the dreaded area as the Barako easily swapped up the lead of the series.

Talk 'N Text found Dwayle Flynn a good replacement for Damien Gamroll as the Add1 Express turned back the Phone Pals, 98-93, to take a 2-1 lead in their best-of-three semifinals encounter.

Led by Willy Wilkinson and Benjerry Rivadio, the Expressers seized the lead in the third quarter and stayed there for good as Flynn, a member of the 2004 NBA champion Detroit Pistons, finished with 16 points.

"He (Flynn) was the leader in my three years as," said Red Bull coaching Guiao, who will take on coach Siot Tanquingcen and the Barangay Ginebra Kings in a best-of-seven semifinal series.

After Red Bull padded its lead to 40-28, Mike Cortes tried to save the team from sinking.

Game 1 of the semifinal series will be on Sunday.

The scores

First Game

RED BULL 89—Sagalis 26, Wong 10, Villanueva 11, Jones 7, Rivadio 6, Dogs 4, Fonacier 2, Bagtas 2, Nilsmer 2, Diaz 5, Valenzuela 2, Raquedel.

ALASKA 98—Jones 10, Jensen 11, Bradley 5, Alas 4, Yapomar 8, Caidoy 4, Bruce 5, Cone (cap) 5, Arroyo 6, Pinlac 5.

Quarters: 18-10, 40-28, 61-61, 89-93.

Pacman set to break barriers against Erik

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—A day after shearing off a balmanni, more polished Manny Pacquiao, Graham Woodlief Beach yesterday made another bold move by having how they plan to reflect and crush Erik Morales.

"We're gonna break him down," Beach told the two-year before a select press conference in a functional gym here where Pacquiao have limbered up for over six hour to maximize peak form.

The idea, Beach said, was to pound at a weak part of Morales' anatomy.

"We go more on the body this time, just like what Barrera had done to him in losing him," Beach confided.

Pacquiao displayed rounded defensive and attacking skills in his final workouts as the Wild Card gym in Hollywood Monday.

But reminded that dogging into the body of a counter-attack specialist like Morales would be equal to breaking through a fortress, Beach said they would push the intensity level higher.

He said they would work to move away from a sticky-tacked battle and instead emphasize on superior speed and power to break the barriers expected to be erected by Morales through his superior style and skills.

Beach admitted they had erred in taking Morales lightly last March.

"Team will be more prepared that we promise everyone," Beach said.

With his heroism, Beach may earn more, there's no denying Pacquiao's specific goal is a crisp 90 minutes.

But after acknowledging that Morales has never been dropped in over 50 pro fights, Beach said they would also go for the rounds.

He said they would box and gain the necessary points.

Senate nixes more funds for Pinoy athletes

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHILE THE SUPREME AND THE 23rd Southeast Asian Games triumph has yet to die down, the Senate, it seems, was hardly affected by it all.

Heading off the P250 million budget recommendation of the Lower House and the P500 million proposed by the Philippine Sports Commission, the Senate committee on finance instead approved just P50 million for sports development for this year.

If it's any consolation, the amount was P1 million higher than last year's budget.

Sports officials read the Senate's decision which they said was unexpected considering the honor bestowed on the national athletes for bagging the 5th Games overall title.

Just recently President Macapagal-Arroyo joined the Philippine Sports writers Association in honoring them as the PSA Athletes of the Year.

"I think we were caught in a crossfire," said a sports official who refused to be named.

Another big Morales Pacquiao adjustment down are "differences" with the measure but remained hopeful they would be more considerate during the bicameral meeting where the national budget will be finalized and approved.

H. Centre, Hapee eye semis

MAKO TODAY (Sandolan Gym)
2 p.m.—Meralco vs. Granny Goose
4 p.m.—Hapee PCU vs. Barbour Coffee

NOT MANY EXPECTED THEM TO GO THIS FAR

After posting their sixth victory, the Hapee Coffee Center Powerhouse can afford to be emotional and against the Hapee PCU Technicians in the PBL Premier Cup, or if you believe in the Sun Aquarius Sign.

Granny Goose Toddlers will take on its namesake in the other match-up of early semifinals action at 2 p.m.

Today's two-in-line advantages, Barbour Coffee and Granny Goose only need to win once in the quarterfinals to advance to the Final Four.

Aaiyza Shaw and Magnolia Ice Cream already claimed the first two semifinal slots after posting the best records in the eliminations round.

Coach Angel Gallaot did relieved Diet Ice Pod-masters dubbed the quarterfinal losses, but said that a Technicians win could mean a possible try on a new game plan versatile for its color.

Jessica N. Ryan

One, united basketball federation in the offing

By Manny Castillo

BEFORE THE END OF MARCH, THE country will finally have a unified basketball federation recognized by the sport's ruling international body.

The country's top basketball stakeholders emerged from a meeting last night united in their decision to respect the memorandum of understanding signed by the International basketball federation (FIBA) and the Philippine Olympic Committee and is calling to form the new association that will pursue the way for the country's reinstatement into international competition.

In the meeting presided by POC chair Robert Aventajado, the Philippine Basketball Association voted unanimously to facilitate the formation of the new association. The POC, meanwhile, will prepare an outline of the federation's new constitution and by-laws.

"Breakthrough's in agreement with respect to handling what was stated in the MOA in its entirety," said Aventajado.

And by everybody, Aventajado meant every major stakeholder of the sport in the country. Present in last night's meeting were POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, PBA commissioner Noli Eala, PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, UAAP's Junior Cojuangco, SCAA's Ito Calvo and Basketball Association of the Philippines president Jose Lina.

Lina's presence in the meeting meant that the lifting of the suspension by the Pilta looms.

Among the three included in the MOU, signed by dignitaries, Cojuangco and Pilta secretary general Patrick Baumann last year, was the formation of a new federation that will include the POC, PBA, PBL, UAAP, NCAA and the like.

With all those required in the country to come up with a national federation before March 31 this year.

The group is set to meet next March 15.

The basketball squabble was the reason the sport wasn't included in the recent 22nd Southeast Asian Games the country hosted.

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SEC MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 1
SERIES OF 2006

GUIDELINES ON THE FILING OF FUNCTIONAL CURRENCY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This commission in its meeting of January 16, 2006, resolved to issue this Circular to guide companies whose functional currency (i.e., the currency of the primary economic environment in which the company operates) is other than the Philippine peso and which compiles the financial statements required to be filed by the following companies:

1. The company's determination of its functional currency shall be made in accordance with PAS 21 - The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates;
2. a company that has for the first time financial statements denominated in a currency other than Philippine pesos ("functional currency PS") for reporting purposes shall notify the Commission that it shall file such financial statements, with an assessment that supports the determination of its functional currency. Please see attached Annex "A" for an illustrative notification;
3. The notification shall be signed by the company's chief executive officer and chief financial officer. It shall be accompanied by a report from the company's external auditor indicating his non-acceptance that the company's determination of its functional currency was made in accordance with PAS 21. Please see attached Annex "B" for an illustrative report of the external auditor;
4. a company whose functional currency is other than the Philippine peso that chooses to present financial statements expressed in Philippine pesos shall submit financial statements required in SRC 68 and SRC 68.1 in accordance with PFRS 1 - The company shall present its first reporting currency financial statements into Philippine pesos in accordance with PAS 21 and (b) submits notification to the Commission in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) above;
5. The notification shall be filed within forty-five (45) days after the end of the year in which the company decides to change its reporting currency PS;
6. In the case of a change in functional currency, the company shall file a notice indicating the proposed change including the reasons thereof within thirty (30) days after the end of year in which the change occurred. The notice shall be signed and accompanied by a report of the company's external auditor in the manner described in paragraph (3) above.

The submission of the said notice is without prejudice to any objection that the Commission may raise on the proposed change taking into account the previous representations by the company and the principles set forth under PAS 21.

This Circular shall be published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines and shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the date of the last publication.

Failure to comply with the foregoing Guidelines shall render the financial statements of the company non-compliant with the applicable rules and shall subject the company concerned to the applicable sanctions provided for in the existing laws.

Signed on behalf of the Commission on January 19, 2006, Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

(SGD.) FE B. BARIN
Chairperson

ANNEX "A"

Illustrative Notification to the SEC on Filing of Functional Currency Financial Statements

The Securities and Exchange Commission
Pursuant to the requirement imposed by Section of SRC Rule 68, (name of Company) notifies the Commission that it will file its financial statements (or expressed in) in (indicate functional currency) starting on (date).

1. **Determination of Functional Currency**

Please present the following financial data to reflect the primary economic environment of the company:

a. **Revenues (at least for the immediately preceding 3 years)**

	(Year 1) in Currency	%	(Year 2) in Currency	%	(Year 3) in Currency	%
Total Revenue (as audited financial statements)	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
Revenues in original currencies:						
a. (U.S. Dollar)	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
b. (Japanese Yen	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
c. (Euro/Deutsche	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
d. (Others (specify by currency)						

b. **Cost and Expenses (at least for the immediately preceding 3 years)**

	(Year 1) in Currency	%	(Year 2) in Currency	%	(Year 3) in Currency	%
Total Cost and expenses per audited financial statements	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
Cost and expenses in original currencies:						
a. (U.S. Dollar)	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
b. (Japanese Yen	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
c. (Euro/Deutsche	xxx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
d. (Others (specify by currency)						

c. **If the foregoing dollar ratio is other than those falling under paragraphs (a) & (b), please state other factors considered as allowed under PAS 21. Attach relevant support as deemed necessary.**

The following factors may also provide evidence of an entity's functional currency:

a. The currency in which funds from financing activities (i.e., issuing debt and equity instruments) are denominated;
b. The currency in which receipts from operating activities are usually retained.

The following additional factors are considered in determining the functional currency of a foreign operation, and whether its functional currency is the same as that of the reporting entity (the reporting entity, in this context, being the entity that has the foreign operation as its subsidiary, branch, associate or joint venture):

a) Whether the activities of the foreign operation are carried out as an extension of the reporting entity, rather than being carried out with a significant degree of autonomy an example of the former is when the foreign operation only sells goods imported from the reporting entity and remits the proceeds to it. An example of the latter is when the operation accumulates cash and other monetary items, incurs expenses, generates income and arranges borrowings, all substantially in its local currency;
b) Whether transactions with the reporting entity are a high or a low proportion of the foreign operation's activities;
c) Whether cash flows from the activities of the foreign operation directly affect the cash flows of the reporting entity and are readily available for remittance to it;
d) Whether cash flows from the activities of the foreign operation are sufficient to service existing and normally expected debt obligations without funds being made available by the reporting entity.

2. **Conclusion**

Based on the consideration of the above factors, which are set forth in PAS 21, The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates, the Company has determined that its functional currency is the (indicate functional currency).

Signed under oath by:

Chief Executive Officer — Chief Finance Officer

NOTARY PUBLIC

ANNEX "B"

Illustrative Report of External Auditor to Accompany Company's Notification to the SEC on Filing of Functional Currency Financial Statements

To (name of Company)

This report is issued in connection with (name of company)'s notification to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that it will file its financial statements expressed in (indicate functional currency) starting in (date).

We have reviewed (name of company)'s determination of its functional currency as described in its Notification to the SEC and we have assessed that the Company's determination of the functional currency was made in accordance with PAS 21, The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rates.

Name and Signature of Independent CPA
BOA Registration Number
SEC Accreditation Number (if any)

Pacquiao Fever

SPECTATOR

ATX Mendoza

THE PACQUIAO FEVER RISES this all-time more so Manny Pacquiao, the only unrivaled boxing star that we have today, fights in a more or less hostile court when he now Unit 223. The venue of the fight is the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, the so-called Sin City of the world because, all year round, it is mostly peopled by gamblers from all over the world.

It is a fight that enthralled us all since it is a fight about as big in import as the Battle in Manila between Ali and Frazier on Oct. 1, 1975. (Ali won by TKO in 14 rounds). It is a fight that will most likely be the defining moment for the Golden-fisted fighter next to the Big City that is Manila in a 12-round-tilt (previously 15 years ago in search of the proverbial pot of gold).

He found more. Besides wealth beyond his wildest dreams (he has bought a few shopping, Porsches, Porsche Carreras), he also gained fame and wide fan-base, like the fabled Beatles of Liverpool, England, that whole world fame.

He has become an international celebrity that not only do we see our own Filipino politicians and leaders line up just to see him, fight (heck, even the president of the world's two most powerful countries is hoping to see him in person as well as a sprinkling of more than Hollywood).

Hint: I was Sheldon Villa, who drew a thumping five-star with his boxing exploits in America in the Roaring Twenties.

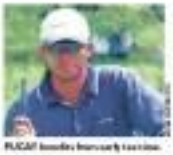
Now now Rush Street, the main watering hole in the greater Filipino home of all time, whose sign of mostly frowned as a small junior lightweight champion recently celebrated the day.

And now in Pacquiao, the wrestler of them all might because he came to it at the right time—at the right time because boxing has become, like golf and tennis, big money business. There's just the many stories by boxing journalist that a former boxing buff, a pair of dollars and a manager stepped in the wheel-to-deals, simply some of the wide-eyed world of boxing can tell the jackpot to an instant—as in the case of Manny Pacquiao.

Pacquiao is now being handled by an American manager Shelley Finkel (he once was Mayweather Jr.). We are only speculate why Pacquiao dropped his former manager Rod Bataan, like a hot wing, the same way that Pacquiao dropped his then-trainer, Hall of Famer Freddie Roach.

Pucay, Balan forge tie for halfway lead

By Herseg B. Castillo



PUCAY breaks Inarcsaby taa time.

Gorres, Amonsot in top shape

Tagaytay joins NBC roster

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Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

ENTERTAINMENT

Thank you, in so many words

Or how Golden Globe winners expressed their happiness

REESE Witherspoon (right) pays tribute to her country-mate while Joaquin Phoenix is incredulous that he was in the "musical-comedy" duet by

• Joaquin Phoenix, Best Actor in a Movie Musical or Comedy, "Walk the Line" (Johnny Cash biopic): poking fun at his dark and brooding image: "Who would ever have thought that I would win in the comedy or musical category?"

• Reese Witherspoon, Best Actress in a Movie Musical or Comedy, "Walk the Line":

"This film is really important to me. It's about where I grew up. It's about Savannah. I'm sure up there listening to."

• Ang Lee, Best Director, "Brokeback Mountain": "The last time an amazing year for American cinema. I just want to give my last thanks to my fellow filmmakers for strengthening our faith in movies."

• Rachel Weisz, Best Supporting Actress, "The Constant Gardener": "I think this with Ralph Fiennes (her co-star). Our couldn't ask for a more magical, a more committed actor."

• Larry McMurtry, Best Screenplay, "Brokeback Mountain": "I think my typewriter, a Hermes 3000, needs one of the noblest instruments of European genius."

• Geena Davis, Best Actress in a (TV) Drama Series, "Commander in Chief": "This is really wonderful for a fledgling little show."

• Felicity Huffman, Best Dramatic Actress, "Transamerica": "I know as actors our job is usually to stand our ideas, but I think as people our job is to be comrades sometimes and so I would like to salute the nominated women who were colleagues, adversaries and a little bit of the time."

• Philip Seymour Hoffman, Best Actor in a (TV) Comedy Series, "Sibwife," winning over four "Desperate Housewives" nominees: "I thought we were all kind of desperate housewives. Mine was just a little more desperate than their stories."

• S. Epatha Merkerson, Best Actress in a TV Movie, "Lackawanna Blues": "I'm SO [late] I feel like I'm 116. And if I weren't in the middle of a hot flash, I'd believe that."

Actress with 'deadly' charms

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

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2 UNDERWORLD 2	7 BLUE MOON AXIO LEGAL WIFE
3 LITTLE MANHATTAN	8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 RUMOR HAS IT	9 THE FAMILY STONE
5 JARHEAD	10 KING KONG

ERMITA

1 UNDERWORLD 3	
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	5 The Chronicles OF NARNIA
3 JARHEAD	6 RUMOR HAS IT
4 LITTLE MANHATTAN	7 KING KONG SAINT ANGE

METRO EAST

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	5 JARHEAD
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	6 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
3 UNDERWORLD 2	7 BLUE MOON
4 RUMOR HAS IT	8 KING KONG

NOVALICHES

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	4 UNDERWORLD 2
2 KING KONG	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 JARHEAD	6 UNDERWORLD 2

CITISQUARE MALABON — PIONEER

1 UNDERWORLD 2	1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 RESERVE	3 JARHEAD
4 RESERVE	4 The Chronicles of NARNIA

STA. ROSA — LIPA

STA. ROSA	LIPA
1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 THE FAMILY STONE	2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 IN HER SHOES
4 SAINT ANGE	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 BEAUTIFUL BOXER	5 BEAUTIFUL BOXER

DASMARIÑAS — ANGELES

DASMARIÑAS	ANGELES
1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 IN HER SHOES	2 IN HER SHOES
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 BLUE MOON
4 SAINT ANGE	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 JARHEAD	

IMUS — STARMILLS

IMUS	STARMILLS
1 BEAUTIFUL BOXER	1 PRIME
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 The Chronicles of NARNIA	3 IN HER SHOES
4 JARHEAD	4 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
5 KING KONG	5 JARHEAD
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	6 The Chronicles of NARNIA

BACOLOD — ILOILO

BACOLOD	ILOILO
1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 IN HER SHOES
3 THE FAMILY STONE	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN	4 PRIME
5 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE	5 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
6 BEAUTIFUL BOXER	6 ELISEON

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AYALA CINEMAS

THX

G1	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	3 RUMOR HAS IT	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
G4	1 RUMORS HAS IT	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	
	4 THE FAMILY STONE	5 JARHEAD	6 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	7 LITTLE MANHATTAN
GB1	1 RUMORS HAS IT		2 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	
GB3	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA		2 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	
	3 JARHEAD	4 LITTLE MANHATTAN	5 RUMOR HAS IT	
ATC	1 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION		2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	
	3 RUMOR HAS IT	4 JARHEAD	5 LITTLE MANHATTAN	
ACC	1 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 IN HER SHOES	4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE

All-Digital Cinemas

1	UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION
2	LITTLE MANHATTAN
3	DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4	THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
5	RUMOR HAS IT...

EVENTS! EVENTS!

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Cinema 10 - 1/21/2006

Ticket Sales - Day Of
Mega Mall - Jan 20 Only
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Cinema 1 - 1/21/2006
Cinema 2 - 1/21/2006
Cinema 3 - 1/21/2006
Cinema 4 - 1/21/2006
Cinema 5 - 1/21/2006
Cinema 6 - 1/21/2006
Cinema 7 - 1/21/2006
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movietime SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

PREMIERE

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Megamall January 20
Cinema 1

BIG TIME
Megamall January 20
Cinema 1

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Megamall January 20
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mom's live-in dad's
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UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
RUMOR HAS IT
JARHEAD

METRO MANILA

UNDERWORLD 2
RUMOR HAS IT
UNDERWORLD 2
KING KONG
LITTLE MANHATTAN
NARNIA
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
MIX LEGAL MIXS
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
BLUE MOON

UNDERWORLD 2
NARNIA
KING KONG
RUMOR HAS IT
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
MIX LEGAL MIXS
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
LITTLE MANHATTAN
BLUE MOON

UNDERWORLD 2
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA
KING KONG
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
LITTLE MANHATTAN
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
MIX LEGAL MIXS
BLUE MOON

UNDERWORLD 2
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA
KING KONG
UNDERWORLD 2
RUMOR HAS IT
MIX LEGAL MIXS
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
BLUE MOON

WHO'S YOUR DADDY
RUMOR HAS IT
KING KONG
NARNIA
LITTLE MANHATTAN
UNDERWORLD 2
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
UNDERWORLD 2
MIX LEGAL MIXS
BLUE MOON
ST. ANGE

UNDERWORLD 2
NARNIA
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
BLUE MOON
RUMOR HAS IT
DON'T GIVE UP ON US

UNDERWORLD 2
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DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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LITTLE MANHATTAN
RUMOR HAS IT
NARNIA

WHO'S YOUR DADDY
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DON'T GIVE UP ON US

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DON'T GIVE UP ON US
UNDERWORLD 2
DEVIL
BLUE MOON
KING KONG

NARNIA
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA
THE MAN
ST. ANGE

NARNIA
THE MAN
JUST LIKE HEAVEN
THE MAN

NARNIA
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA
THE MAN

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

NARNIA
UNDERWORLD 2
DOMICILE OF CHILLY ROSE
IN HER SHOES
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
KING KONG
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
NARNIA

WHO'S YOUR DADDY
RESERVED
NARNIA
PRIME
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
DOMICILE OF CHILLY ROSE
RESERVED
IN HER SHOES

NARNIA
JUST LIKE HEAVEN
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
IN HER SHOES
WHO'S YOUR DADDY
DOMICILE OF CHILLY ROSE
NARNIA
BLUE MOON
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
DOMICILE OF CHILLY ROSE

SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

1 UNDERWORLD 2
1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40, 11:50

2 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
and
RUMOR HAS IT
1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40, 11:50
FRI, SAT

3 RUMOR HAS IT
1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40, 11:50

4 JARHEAD
1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40, 11:50
SAT

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GUARANTEED SEATS

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LITTLE MANHATTAN
12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

RUMOR HAS IT
1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30

UNDERWORLD 2
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

JARHEAD
12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00

DOMICILE OF CHILLY ROSE
11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:45, 10:15

UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
Shang Cineplex

2 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
Shang Cineplex

3 RUMOR HAS IT
Shang Cineplex

4 JARHEAD
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Araneta CinePLEX 10

KUNG FU HUSTLE
DON'T GIVE UP ON US
UNDERWORLD 2
RUMOR HAS IT
MARLY STONE
NARNIA
UNDERWORLD 2
LITTLE MANHATTAN
BLUE MOON
JARHEAD

MALL CINEMAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 NARNIA
4 DRAWG SKIM
5 JARHEAD
DEVIL

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Actress with 'deadly' charms

From page B1

someone close to her told me that someone is already mediating so that Berley and Ingrid can settle their differences once and for all. And so it goes ... behind every beautiful artist is a shrewd manager. Stressed for sweeter!

John Lazaro is said to be one of Jennylyn Mercado's ardent suitors. There's no more bitterness left in her heart after the split-up with Mark Herras. Sino ba naman ang makakatiis sa kanya, 'noh? Pero ingat lang sa mga dumidiskarte. Jen is in no hurry to fall in love again and she's keeping her doors open. I wonder if John will blow his chances of winning Jen's heart if she finds out that he was ejected as Prince of Anipan getting cozy with a twinkling chic. Or is he one of those who wouldn't let anyone live in peace and as official one-off-cam? That's not totally unheard of among most young actors these days, huh!

Kat de Castro 'sad'

I HEREby my good friend Katherine de Castro her sentiments about "Magandang Gabi Bisaya's" folding up. She shared, "I feel sad but at the same time proud of GMA and my dad's (GV Sabayon Sr.) accomplishments. For almost 50 years, it aired Philippine TV his other show was merch in and Mike and other celebs. The one thing I question that. That's why I feel more sad for the MGB staff who never lacked compassion for every task they had to accomplish. I'm sure MGB will be sorely missed by many." Then she lightened up, "Oh well ... bilog ang mundo. MGB just needs to move." And on do the nagging political surgeon, right, Kat?

Brilliant Brillanta

BRILLIANT Gonzalez Brillante Mendoza is at it again. After reaping accolades here and abroad for his Cannes Film Festival entry, "Masahista," which won in the 2005 Locarno Filmfest in Switzerland, his next ultra masters ("Kaleldo") is going to hit theaters on March 8. It will have a premiere in Pampanga (where the entire film was shot) before its regular run. The movie got a B rating from the Cinema Evaluation Board and a PG-13 from the MTRCB.

Dindi B bears no grudges towards the Metro Manila Film Festival board, who named-dame "Kaleldo" for the festival line-up. Gotta to think of it, after the MMFF fiasco, it's better that Brillante's gem of a movie has been spared.

I had the privilege of watching a preview of "Kaleldo" (or "Batanes" in Kapampangan). I was mesmerized by its rich texture, crisp story-telling and the superb acting of the main cast.

The story is set in Guagua, Pampanga a decade after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo which ravaged the province with lahar. It follows the lives of Bonifilo "Mang Bodi" Manansala (Johnny Delgado), a woodcarver, and his three daughters Angel Aquino, Julianna Palermo and Cherrie Pie Picache) and their relationships with the people close to them throughout seven summers.

It is told in three segments, each one told from the point of view of one daughter, initiated to every segment are social occasions, popularly observed in the Philippines, with a symbolic motif for each, representing the elements once, fire, water, sky, blood, music and earth. As in Pharaoh's aftermath, the film shows that we can find beauty even among the ruins. It's not so much what you're looking at but what you see, after all of love and life's trials, that matters in the end. No doubt "Kaleldo" will live up to what it means and inside like the summer heat in the Sun of five.

Tahanang Pinoy

FILIPINOS consider their home their sanctuary and refuge. Hoping more developments to mind, wouldn't it be nice if we pampered our homes a wee? Taking good care of our house and making it look good doesn't mean that it has to be expensive all the time. This is where "Tahanang Pinoy" comes in. Hosts BJ Ledesma, real estate developer; Architect Gelo Widmon, Anna Gonzales, interior designer, and Chef Cristina lend their professional expertise to make every home a home sweet home. Catch Sethbrowns' award-winning show at 11 a.m. Sundays on ABC-5.

Catch Hi-Haven Productions' "Mag Makeday sa Dalgdig at Ilo" starring Bet Once and featuring Dennis Trillo, Alessandra de Rossi, Angel Locsin with Vhoosh, Jolo and Ian Staging Divas at Dalgdig Beach Resort in Quezon Are on Jan 26. Kudos to my dear friend Bert Inventor for mounting the "fantabulous."

(E-Mail comments to bobchgrill@yahoo.com.)

BUSINESS

E-mail: [illegible]
Editor Raul G. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Cecile S. Marbella

BIR eyes new amnesty program

Scheme to cover income tax liabilities

By Michelle F. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR) IS considering another amnesty-type program catering solely to taxpayers with unpaid income tax liabilities.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Bating said the revenue agency had been receiving requests from a number of taxpayers to come up with a program that would allow them to avoid audit and prosecution as long as they paid their tax deficiencies plus additional fees.

The plan to implement an amnesty for income tax delinquents followed the expiration of the Enhanced Voluntary Assessment Program (EVAP) last Jan. 2. The EVAP covered nearly all types of taxes such as the value-added tax, documentary stamp tax, estate tax, donor's tax and capital gains tax.

Under the EVAP, applicants who had tax liabilities for taxable years 2004 and earlier were given one of the BIR's priority list to start making upon settling of the taxes due and the payment of charges. The tax payments should be at least 30 percent higher than the tax payment submitted the previous year to qualify for the EVAP.

The EVAP ran from October last year to Jan. 2 this year, but the BIR said it was not unusual to entertain requests for the extension of additional revenues from the amnesty. The BIR targeted to collect P2 billion in incremental revenues from the EVAP. Bating said the actual collection figure would be available in the coming days.

Since the BIR has been getting requests for a similar program executing income taxes, the BIR said it would move to study the proposal to raise additional revenues for the cash-strapped government.

Bating said that he personally encouraging voluntary tax payments as a means to lessen revenue leaks that go through the expenses and raise remaining percentage of penalizing tax evaders. Based on projections of the top BIR post, the revenue agency has gone slow in the filing of tax evasion charges under the Run after Tax Evaders Program (SAFE).

Under the SAFE program, established during the time of former Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima and former Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., the BIR and the Department of Finance filed tax evasion charges against high-profile individuals every week. The goal of the program was to inject the fear factor and therefore discourage the public from evading taxes.

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S&P maintains 'stable' outlook for RP banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER ENDING 2005 on an upbeat note, the Philippine banking sector is seen off to a good start this new year despite lingering risks from a "weak" operating environment.

All listed banking agency Standard & Poor's yesterday maintained its "stable" outlook on local bank ratings following improvements in asset quality over the last few months.

S&P analysts Tan Sze Ern and Ivan Tan said the banks' overall bad loan ratio, which dropped to 5.4% as of end-November from 6.2% as of end-2004, is expected to improve further this year.

In its latest banking report, S&P previously noted that the growth in Philippine banks' non-performing loans (NPLs) had not only been arrested but was reversed, while deposits, the system's main source of funding, remained fairly stable for the past three years.

But S&P warned that the industry's risk profile remained high, reflecting a "weak" operating environment.

"Although profitability improved in 2005, this was due mainly to trading gains from treasury operations, predominantly from the sale of high-yielding government securities," S&P said.

At the annual recession for the banking community hosted by the Monetary Board Tuesday night, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. noted the rapid subsiding ratio of banks restated with the above international benchmark and the sector's non-performing loan ratio had dropped to a single digit level.

Tetangco also cited the country's resilient macroeconomic growth, single-digit inflation rate despite runaway oil prices, sturdy peso recovery, slowdown in interest rates, surge in foreign inflows from remittances and overseas as well as the government's strong fiscal administration efforts.

"We are off to a good start in 2006. Of course you and I know we have a long way to go before we can truly say everything is A-OK," Tetangco said.

The BSP chief said it was critical for the GMA to keep an eye on the risks to inflation given continuing high oil prices while economic managers would have to pursue the investments for economic reforms that would sustain growth in the long-term.

Meanwhile, S&P noted that the banking industry remained fragmented despite investments from the BSP to encourage consolidation.

"The turnover of executives small, fundamentally weak and undercapitalized. S. strong management remains to determine the sector's viability and growth prospects," S&P said.

The rating firm also lamented that banks continued to be dependent on trading gains, with their investment portfolios accounting for 31.7 percent of total assets in June 2005.

"The dependence reflects limited lending opportunities because of the reluctance of consumers with good credit quality base minimal borrowing programs. The continued dependence on trading gains translates the banks' revenues more vulnerable to interest rate volatility," S&P noted.

The rating firm added that capitalization remained weak despite improvements during the past two years.

"Although several banks have raised their Tier 1 capital, they are still unable to absorb the expected huge distributions resulting from asset disposals. Hence, the central bank has permitted the staggered recognition of loss provisions over 10 years," it explained.

VECO
Visayan Electric Company

Notice of Amendment of Invitation for

Expression of Interest

to supply 200 MW new capacity of

Visayan Electric Company, Inc. ("VECO")

In connection with the Invitation for Expression of Interest published in the following newspapers, *The Freemen* and *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (on 21 December 2005), *SunStar Cebu* (on 22 December 2005), and *The Philippine Star* (on 24 December 2005), the Visayan Electric Company, Inc. announces an amendment in its supply requirement from 100 MW to 200 MW.

In view of this amendment, notice is likewise given to all that the registration deadline has been extended to **15 February 2006**.

Interested parties are invited to submit a formal Expression of Interest to supply the electricity requirements of Visayan Electric Company, Inc. ("VECO") for the year 2009 to 2034. VECO's franchise covers the following areas: cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Talisay and the surrounding municipalities of Minglanilla, Naga, San Fernando, Consolacion and Liloan.

Interested parties' Expression of Interest should include a brief profile of their company and must be submitted to the address below. A registration fee of US$2,500.00 shall be charged upon registration. Once registered, interested parties will be given information updates and other documents relating to VECO's project.

Parties who have previously registered and paid the registration fee shall no longer be required to register.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
Visayan Electric Company, Inc.
J. Panis St., Banilad
Cebu City, Philippines
Tel: (6332) 230-6326
Fax: (6332) 231-7531
E-mail: bidschairman@veco.com.ph

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(PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE)

GMA 7 sees modest profit growth for '06

By Clarissa S. Santos

GMA NETWORK INC. IS LOOKING AT A MODest, but still double digit, growth in profit this year in anticipation of increasing expenses related to the company's continuing expansion, its top official said.

"We will definitely earn more than P2 billion this year but the growth in profit will not be as large as in previous years," said GMA 7 president Felipe Gozon in an interview.

Last year, GMA 7 hit its P2 billion profit target, but revenue growth fell, the net income was 33 percent higher than the P1.5 billion in 2004. The network posted a profit growth of 43 percent in 2004.

Gozon said they could see interest in a 20-percent local growth this year, noting that making it to 25 percent growth could be difficult.

"We are already coming from a high base so in terms of percentage growth, it will be lower this year," he said. "Also, we are incurring a lot of expenses that may not immediately generate revenues."

GMA 7 embarked on three major projects last year. These are the overseas expansion, the new programming for Channel 11 dubbed as Quality TV or QTV, and the improvement of GMA 7's presence in major provinces.

Gozon said GMA 7 would spend P1 billion this year for the three ongoing projects. Consequently, expenses related to overhead would increase because the new ones entailed additional staff and new facilities.

Still, GMA 7 has eclipsed its former rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. in terms of profits and ratings in Mega Manila, home to the bulk of viewers and buyers.

The network's growing profitability puts it in a stronger position to do an initial public offering in the first half of the year. The plan is to sell 20 to 30 percent of the company and raise between P6 billion and P9 billion for the shareholders and the company.

Deutsche Bank and ATR Kim Eng are conducting a due diligence audit on the company to determine the current market value of GMA 7.

Gozon said the new audit could place the company's value at more than P30 billion, which was the previous valuation.

Shares close ...

Previous page B1

Master loans in Tokyo general- ly smashed the region, with investors more anxious about a probable interest acceptance Literature.

The Nikkei composite index grew up 28.81 points to 3,125.45 after trading between 2,117.61 and 2,154.30. Turnover was 1.66 billion shares worth P2.19 billion, about a third of which were sold in private transactions.

The all-shares index fell 19.28 points to 999.76.

Losers led gainers 37 to 21, with 13 stocks unchanged.

Dealers said the slump from ordinary prices overnight Tuesday to close 0.8 percent lost a failed 2005 military mainly idle on several investors.

"We've missed alongside other markets in Asia, which have turned negative as they reached their highest levels in two years overnight," said Mark Alan Gonzales of Commodities.com. AFP

CURRENCIES

January 18, 2006		Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	55.7500
Australia	Dollar	0.7800	0.7800	43.4850
United Kingdom	Pound	1.7200	1.7200	95.8900
Canada	Dollar	0.8600	0.8600	47.9450
Japan	Yen	0.0085	0.0085	0.4739
Switzerland	Franc	0.7700	0.7700	42.9275
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1282	0.1282	7.1472
Singapore	Dollar	0.5900	0.5900	32.8925
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0305	0.0305	1.7004
South Korea	Won	0.0010	0.0010	0.0558
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.2632	0.2632	14.6726
Thailand	Baht	0.0255	0.0255	1.4216
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	0.0001	0.0056
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2667	0.2667	14.8678
Kuwait	Dinar	3.4247	3.4247	190.9230
Bahrain	Dinar	2.6525	2.6525	147.8719
United Arab Emirates	Dirham	0.2723	0.2723	15.1789
Qatar	Riyal	0.2747	0.2747	15.3151
Oman	Rial	2.5974	2.5974	144.8186
Egypt	Pound	0.1737	0.1737	9.6830
Jordan	Dinar	1.4104	1.4104	78.6302
Lebanon	Pound	0.0006	0.0006	0.0335
Kenya	Shilling	0.0139	0.0139	0.7750
Czech Republic	Koruna	0.0350	0.0350	1.9513
Hungary	Forint	0.0047	0.0047	0.2621
Poland	Zloty	0.2750	0.2750	15.3312
Romania	Leu	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Russia	Ruble	0.0350	0.0350	1.9513
Turkey	Lira	0.7400	0.7400	41.2550
Bulgaria	Lev	0.5700	0.5700	31.7775
Croatia	Kuna	0.1400	0.1400	7.8050
Slovenia	Tolar	0.0042	0.0042	0.2341
Slovakia	Koruna	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Estonia	Kroon	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Latvia	Lat	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lithuania	Litas	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Ukraine	Hryvnia	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Belarus	Ruble	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Moldova	Leu	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Armenia	Dram	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Georgia	Lari	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Azerbaijan	Manat	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Kazakhstan	Tenge	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Uzbekistan	Som	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Turkmenistan	Manat	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Kyrgyzstan	Som	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tajikistan	Somoni	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Mongolia	Tugrik	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Vietnam	Dong	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Laos	Kip	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cambodia	Riel	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Myanmar	Kyat	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Brunei	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Fiji	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Papua New Guinea	Kina	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Solomon Islands	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Vanuatu	Vatu	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Samoa	Tala	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tonga	Pa'anga	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Micronesia	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Palau	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Marshall Islands	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Kiribati	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tuvalu	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nauru	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cook Islands	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Niue	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tokelau	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wallis and Futuna	Franc	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
New Caledonia	Franc	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
French Polynesia	Franc	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pitcairn Islands	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Norfolk Island	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Christmas Island	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocos (Keeling) Islands	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Heard and McDonald Islands	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Antarctica	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
British Indian Ocean Territory	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Diego Garcia	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Chagos Archipelago	Dollar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Saint Helena	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Ascension Island	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tristan da Cunha	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Falkland Islands	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Gibraltar	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Isle of Man	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Jersey	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Guernsey	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Alderney	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Sark	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Faroe Islands	Krone	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Greenland	Krone	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Iceland	Krona	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Norway	Krone	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Sweden	Krona	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Finland	Markka	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Denmark	Krone	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Ireland	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Portugal	Escudo	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Spain	Peseta	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
France	Franc	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Monaco	Franc	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Andorra	Peseta	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Italy	Lira	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
San Marino	Lira	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Vatican City	Lira	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Malta	Lira	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cyprus	Pound	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Greece	Drachma	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Albania	Lek	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Macedonia	Denar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mark	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Serbia and Montenegro	Dinar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Slovenia	Tolar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Croatia	Kuna

Away on a merger

PHL IS THE FIRST CHITTERBOX, MIGHT, Jerusa, now look for good in the Philippines after his short, Melancholy-imposed "exile" to the United States?

That is the the biggest mystery that people in business are talking about these days.

And in case as a 2.7 percent Bet, the poor Mike the Knife immediately drew talk about sorry big chesk allegedly involving this rare schizophrenic of Chinoyness.

There was the supposed Malacañang connection of a certain Chinese-Filipino businessman known as "BT," owner of a retail mall in Bacoodo.

Our hero "BT" was said to oversee the controlled construction racket at the outskirts of all "foreign" country, that known mall in Binondo Kanwa as "Tutti Building."

In the Chinese-Filipino community rites of course have a clear idea of who that "connection" is.

That's one. Two—they are also talking about a deal between a foreign multinational in this country and a government money outdoor.

It's some sounds like Pagcor. Remember that Pagcor boss Efraim Genuino is close to Mike the Knife. They come from the same Rotary Club in Makati.

They are so close that, when this one ultimate whose unnamed points, Genuino was immediately named boss of the gambling money machine, Pagcor.

Even ahead of the appointment of the Ilocano-sweetener, he (but nothe)

As for item No. 3, a former congressperson indicated to our contact that the former contractor cum Bar Congressman with big-time businessmen in Hong Kong.

Said to have been seen travelling recently with Mike the Knife in Hong Kong was SM Group boss Aganorsa Tessie Sy.

Also with the two is the SM Group's brother man to the Equitable PCI Bank board, a former bank executive named Vicente Paulino.

Paulino is said to be close to members Sir Vivian Yuchengco, who was also with the group in Hong Kong, having the to excite golfing companion of Mike the Knife.

Interestingly enough, joining these two on other banks, Bey David, president of the newly-named Development Bank of the Philippines.

But David was also said to be the sub (i.e. "fronted") of Mike the Knife to take the place of SSS boss Corazon de la Paz as head of the pension fund.

It's no wonder that auditioning talk a flying around the stock market about what they were cooking in that Hong Kong trip.

For sure, the Sy family's SM Group is partying on Equitable PCI...wanting to take control of the bank by simply merging it with the group's flusso-ky Ore.

That means the SM Group can take control of the country's third largest bank—again, THIRD—without the Sy Cousin's or the SM Group's having to pay for all of it.

So what has that got to do with Mike the Knife? When they were seen on a trip abroad recently was the merger part of the Hong Kong huddle?

Well, the government-run pension funds SSS and GSIS are the biggest investors in Equitable PCI, and as the SM Group needs those to express to the merger.

If they do—say, with the, ex, "blessings" of the Palace—the SM Group acquires another huge bank at no added cost to the Sy Family. Ka, ok, tak?

And if that happens, it will be close to impossible for the GSIS and the SSS to unload their P30 billion or so investment in the bank. They will be locked in.

Nobody in his or her right mind will want to buy minority shares in a bank that, to put it mildly, is controlled by the SM Group.

That's why GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia is either mad against the merger.

On the other hand, SSS boss De la Paz is studying the SM Group's proposal. Whaaat!

Garcia revealed to media that a foreign group was interested in buying the GSIS holdings in Equitable PCI for P92 a share.

That is a good premium over the current price in the stock market of P63 each.

In comparison, under the merger proposal of the SM Group, the Equitable PCI shares is offer are valued at only less than P60 each—or lower than market price!

Now, if you were the SSS boss, what is there to think about, given the price of P92 from the foreign member versus the price of P60 from the SM Group?

You don't think about it, right? Immediately, you reject the merger, right?

Unless of course there are other considerations such as, to "indirectly" from upstairs? Such as from somebody big at the Palace?

BREAKTIME

Comrade R. Bacod III

SMC beer sales up in China

Guangdong unit posted 21% growth to $21.4M in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. is doing better in China.

SMC said in a statement yesterday that revenue from its investment operations in South China grew 21 percent last year to $21.4 million.

On the other hand, the volume of products from the San Miguel Guangdong Brewery (SMBG) in 2005 rose 38 percent.

This was attributed to moves by SMC to bolster its "Empire" beer brand in the region, considered one of the fastest growing beer markets in China.

Last year, SMBG also developed new packaging for its brands, including a new crated variant for its Gold Ragday brand, Dragon Beer.

The Guangdong brewery was inaugurated by San Miguel in 1996 as San Miguel Shunde Brewery.

It dominated the country's equipment of the beer market in South China with the introduction of Shiro in 640-milliliter bottles in the city of Shunde.

San Miguel Guangdong also gained wider access into the premium 'beer market in South China through San Miguel Pale Pilsen and Premium Dragon Beer.

The beers were models of quality excellence in this year's Shunde Selection.

Market leader Dragon Beer, one of the top attractions in the annual Guangzhou Beer Festival, likewise won an award from the international quality rating institution.

Operations in Greater China showed a 11 percent improvement over the previous year due to strong Dragon and Blue Star volumes.

Consolidated San Miguel operating income for the nine-month period last year was P6.16 million, 14 percent better than 2004.

Tax cuts for salaried workers gain ground

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE PROPOSED WHAMMIES aimed at chronically red-eating the taxes paid by individual income tax earners have gained momentum in the House ways and means committee.

At closing Sunday called by committee chair Rep. Jacli Lacson, the Federation of Philippine Industries Inc. and the Federation of Philippine Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. endorsed the tax relief, agreeing with Lapus that middle-income taxpayers deserved a tax break.

"If the overseas Filipino workers are our new heroes in foreign exchange with billions of dollars in remittances, our salary-wage earners are the martyrs in terms of revenue contribution of over P83 billion in income tax," said Lapus, a former banker and economics professor.

Lapus noted that the Bureau of Internal Revenue separated from self-employed businessmen and professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, paid a measly P6.8 billion in income taxes in 2004.

In contrast, individual income earners completed P4 percent of total individual income tax collections of the government for that year.

Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House economic affairs committee, estimated the "aggregate annual benefits to ordinary working families" could reach P8.9 billion if the measures were enacted.

"I've already written the President to swiftly this as urgent," said Salceda, who authored House Bill No. 3822, which is one of the 10 tax relief bills being "harmonized" by Lapus.

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BUSINESS

Treasury offers bonds swap deal

Improving domestic debt management

By Michelle V. Abanes

THE BUREAU OF TREASURY said it would offer holders of peso-denominated bonds the opportunity to exchange their holdings for newly issued Treasury bonds with maturities of three, five and seven years.

The move is expected to enable the government to better manage domestic debt by smoothing the average maturity of the obligations by one year from the current 4.7 years.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a press briefing that the Treasury would auction off next month 3-, 5-, and 7-year bonds, which existing government security holders can acquire by exchanging their current T-bond holdings.

The Treasury said the government would be offering a minimum of P50 billion in 3-year bonds, to be auctioned off on Feb. 20; P25 billion worth of 5-year bonds, and P20 billion worth of 7-year bonds. The 3-year and 7-year bonds would be offered on Feb. 24.

"The response [of investors] was tremendous because many have been waiting for this," Cruz said. He noted that the program would address the problem of some investors who are having difficulty selling their bonds in the capital market.

Prior to the press briefing yesterday afternoon, Cruz and other finance officials met with securities investors to discuss the program.

"We're trying to simplify and streamline [the exercise] as much as we can, in doing, the market benefits a great deal in terms of providing it with greater liquidity and improving pricing," Cruz told reporters.

In the meantime, Credit Suisse First Boston, the financial arranger of the debt exchange program, said there have been P588 billion worth of bonds issued in the past with average maturity of three years or less; P200 billion worth of bonds with maturity of five to seven years.

Credit Suisse said it was hoping that at least 20 percent of current domestic bond holders would avail of the terms of the offer.

The Treasury said that while it had set minimum amounts for these debt offerings, the government was willing to accommodate all the holders of the P885 billion worth of bonds issued in the past who were willing to exchange their holdings for these to be issued next month.

"We are signaling to the investing community that we are going to manage our debts actively," said Finance Secretary Margarita Teves in a statement.

The debt consolidation program will follow similar initiatives in 1996 and 2002 when the government exchanged existing bonds with new issues to manage its liabilities.

ASEAN TOURISM FORUM
A dance troupe from De Ma La Elementary School performs at the Davao International Airport to welcome delegates to the Asean Tourism Forum. The meeting opened in Davao City on Jan 15. (AMZ DENOLAN JR./PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER)

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BPI unloading ₱6B worth of bad assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISlands, the country's second biggest lender, plans to unload P5.9-P6 billion worth of bad assets this year, whether or not the Special Purpose Vehicle law is extended.

BPI president Aurelio Montinola III told reporters the bad assets would be sold in about three separate tranches as part of the bank's continuing asset clean-up.

In a separate interview, BPI senior vice president for asset recovery management group Lawyer Montes said that half of the P5-P6 billion worth of assets to be sold this year consisted of repos while the other half were non-performing loans.

"We're hoping that the SPV Law extension would be passed soon so we could move this forward but even without it, we'll push through with the sale," Montes said.

The SPV Law, which expired April last year, waived some of the rates and fees charged on the sale or transfer of nonbanking durable money instrument, capital gains tax and expanded value added tax, it also cut registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

Last year, BPI unloaded about P4.8 billion in bad assets. P2.1 billion in real and properties owned and acquired (repossessed) and P2.3 billion in non-performing loans.

Montes said the total bad assets would trim the bank's bad asset load, including those from recently acquired Prudential Bank, by about 25 percent.

Within the next 60 days, Montes said BPI would be able to finalize the first tranche of the BPI assets for this year worth P2-P4 billion.

BPI now has total resources of P525 billion, deposits of P403 billion and gross loan portfolio of P325 billion.

BPI had to absorb more bad loans from Prudential Bank due to a failed BPI deal launched by the old owners of the acquired bank. ... as well as some differences in accounting treatments.

BPI bought 91.3 percent of the Lucio Tan family's Prudential Bank in August last year through block purchases at the Philippine Stock Exchange worth P5.6 billion.

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DOE steps up efforts to promote flex-fuel use

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY said it would ask local vehicle makers to make available hybrid vehicles with flex-fuel engines in the local market.

It said it would start talks with local automakers to iron out issues related to this, including the importation of such vehicles. The department's energy executives encourage the local assembly of flex-fuel vehicles.

Ford Motors earlier committed to invest $26 million for the establishment of a factory that would produce flex-fuel vehicles, or those that can use alternative fuels, in the country.

Energy utilization and management bureau (EUMB) director Mario Marasigan said the DOE wanted to get other vehicle manufacturers to do the same.

"We want negotiating with car manufacturers soon for the possibility of bringing in hybrid cars and vehicles with ethanol-adaptive engines," he said.

An industry source said Japanese car maker Honda Motors was also considering bringing into the market vehicles that run on compressed natural gas (CNG) or biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in an earlier interview that the DOE had met to outline formal expressions of interest or tentative commitments from other vehicle manufacturers.

But with or without formal expressions of interest, Marasigan said the DOE would seek the help of vehicle manufacturers in addressing the country's efforts to promote the use of alternative fuels.

He said the DOE would also spearhead talks with local oil firms to discuss issues surrounding the pre-blending of ethanol with gasoline and concomitant water (CME) with diesel.

PSE gives tips on investing

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXchange is holding at 2 p.m. today a special briefing on stock market investing at its headquarters in Ortigas, Pasig City.

PSE president and chief executive officer Francis Lim said the forum was designed for small investors. The exchange has invited prominent stock market analyst Luis Lorenzo of ABS-Cbn Investor Inc. to share with the audience his know-how and market outlook for the year.

The participants will also get a better look at upcoming initial public offerings and a glimpse of potential offerings in the pipeline this year, Lim added.

For more details, call 6886-7227 and 30.

SOMETHING so right and light after the holidays /C5

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PAELLA

Purists say it doesn't need tomato sauce but only a small piece of tomato—peeled, pitted and minced— to balance the sauté's acidity

LICOR de Crema Catalana

Perfect Paella

PLEASE FEATURE, BEFORE VALENTINE'S, affordable wine and restaurant encounters: dates.

CHELO BAND

For 2006, I'm making it my resolve to find great places to eat at reasonable prices. Read on, friend

Two Tuesdays ago, I found myself at Inis Sahara, the new playground of Fr. Nicky Licos. If you recall, he is the brilliant man behind the research on hara-kiru we published some month ago.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Maggie Aglipay

John is no stranger to the world of food, having his many ventures even setting up the Tempura Maven and the country's first churn, The Carnie, at the Hyatt. Regency Manila when he was the hotel's CEO. He now sits the Tempura owner of the Apan Playa.

Two years ago, he left country about setting and decided to set up Home Meals Kitchens Corp., with the intention of delivering—on order—paella to homes and offices. Home Meals has (and subsequently what is now known as "Paella Parties"—festive occasions where a mixto, boisin paella (delivered ready-to-eat or cooked on-site by personal chefs), other Spanish delicacies.

From bodega to bistro

Recently, I met and the owners of Barcino Gourmet joined forces and came up with Inis Sahara Bistro. Their shared vision is to revitalize the last-loved and most popular Spanish meals in their original, traditional and classical forms using authentic ingredients and cooking methods, in an environment with a cheerful likeness to an old bodega turned into a bistro. This is a small, family-type restaurant which serves and sells wine, as well as other little Spanish delicacies, to accompany it.

Over glasses of Palacios Vina Valdavieso Bega Tinto Joven (Valdevieso is one of the great wine houses of Spain—especially famous for its wines, the most same equivalent as French champagne), was from Rioja, one of the best wine regions of Spain and, if only for that, held enough merit for us Hedonistic wines to agree as he silver makes mention of Rioja in his stories. Tinto Joven is a young red wine bottled after less than a year from harvest. This exceptional young red has a strong, fine aroma, a well-bodied palate and a lingering finish with just the right acidity. Made from Tempranillo grapes, which are among the best varieties in the world, this is a really good deal at ₱200 a bottle, restaurant price.

Paella talk

Over cuttable of Rhinds, Gorilla de Arias (tender, delicious ribs) and paella, our discussion drifted to Soler's firm beliefs on the perfect paella, a belief he shares with Lorenzo

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What 'broadband' is all about

LIKE MANY CONSUMERS, MS. SUSHY understood that new developments in internet service called broadband services, but we're getting a clearer idea of what it is all about now that our mailbox is getting consumer complaints along with price rebates, fliers and invitations from service providers to switch from our traditional dial up service to broadband.

Broadband had been hyped by fliers and advertisements: "incredibly access speed," "fastest way to surf [the latest, net], download upload online info, games and entertainment." "30 percent times faster than conventional dial up modem."

Simply put, broadband is a sweeping term for super high-speed internet access.

The weekend, we received a press release from Rep. Joseph Santiago giving us detailed information about the local broadband market.

"We expect Internet use in the country to grow by leaps and bounds as the benefits denied us fast, powerful dial-up and broadband Internet access does been subscribers," he predicted.

Santiago explained, "Broadband is attractive, especially to online subscribers because they can use their telephones for voice calls while accessing connected to the Internet all the time."

Here are more data from Santiago's well-researched report:

• The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) charges P600 for a medium-speed Internet service and unlimited Internet access. Other service providers, he added, offer unlimited online use for as low as P999 monthly.

• As of September 2003, PLDT had 70,000 broadband Internet subscribers, an increase of 54 percent more to 40,500 users in September 2004.

• Smart Communications Inc. and Globe had, however, there, about 20,000 wireless broadband subscribers as of September 2003.

Santiago, former chief of the National Telecommunications Commission, is currently vice chair of the house transportation and communications committee.

Complaints

This one is from engineer Melvin Mercado, as follows: "My family applied for a DSL connection in New Manila. After being on the waiting list for more than one month, the final response was that no installation could be made because there was no available port. Also, [the telephone company] advertises that it provides quick service in few days.

When Jin Samuel, you spoke for a DSL connection in the afternoon, and you got the set over the next day."

We forwarded a copy of the complaint to the company's customer service desk. The desk supervisor promised to communicate with engineer Mercado.

In fact, Saul Tolentino of Gryfind 8, Wakas, wanted about overzealous broadband salespersons who didn't deliver on their promise. He said, in September, he signed up with a provider after making it clear to the sales representative that he had no landline and he was using a Macintosh computer. The salesman assured him there was no problem.

Ramon wrote: "The delivery man promptly [but to my chagrin, the man didn't have driver-installers for Macintosh. And, worse, no interconnection to a landline link was made as promised. I went on e-mail to the manager of the service company who replied promptly and said the corresponding salesperson had been fired. The manager also assured me that they would get installers drivers for Mac users like me."

But Ramon did not hear from the manager again so he said he was now applying instead for Smart's Wi-Fi service.

From Jun Ramirez of Cainta: "Smart's Wi-Fi service was supposed to provide up to 384 Kbps wireless, Always-On Connection internet access. But a week after installation, it has been an endless struggle to [access] the internet, even with a simple task such as reading my email. To top it all, there is a lock-in subscription period of one year. One has to pay up to three times more than the installation fee for disconnection of a service that is [allowed] non-existent."

Ramirez's customer service representative promised to get in touch with Mr. Ramirez.

PLDT responds

Bhelle Ramos Ordoñez of PLDT MyDSL Customer Care sent us a copy of their response to the complaint of DSL subscriber E Hughes about spam email.

"We would like to inform you E-Hughes (that unsolicited/spam mail you received could be bout messages being sent via SMTP to propagate this kind of mail. Viruses usually are in the history on e-mail that contains bogus information that mislead users. Some of these bout messages also "spoof" different e-mail addresses in the To or From field... spam mail (may also be) sent by a spoofer of an online service that you patronize usually visited previously over the internet."

Ordoñez advised the subscriber to delete spam or filter out block unwanted messages based on domain names to prevent entry of unsolicited mail. This could be done by activating the e-mail filtering feature included in e-mail programs such as Outlook Express, Microsoft Outlook or Eudora.

A last resort, according to Ordoñez, would be for Mr. Hughes to change his e-mail address. The process would take 24 to 48 hours.

HENY SISON

CULINARY SCHOOL

THE ESSENTIAL BAKING & PASTRY SERIES. The 10 – day hands-on class will cover the basics of pastry, desserts, bread baking as well as cake decorating. It is suitable for those wishing an entry level position or pastry shop. Time: 8:30AM to 5:30PM. Classes begin on January 21 – March 26, 2004. Classes are held every Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES. The 20 day hands on class is an intensive way of learning the basics of cooking & baking. This program is for anyone who wants to work towards becoming a professional chef. Class begins February 10 – April 30, 2004. Classes are held every Fridays to Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Tuition fee includes ingredients, manuals, aprons, chef's jacket and chefs hat. For more information call 756-0366 or 412-7782 and ask Ms. Rose or Jenny.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

CLASS I – Wednesday (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) classes on NEW CLASS! BASIC BAKING & PASTRY WITH CHEF MARIA CRISTINA "BABE" ROXAS TO BAKE AT HOME by Chef Jane Penales. Yum Consultant, Author of The Filipino Cookbook Recipes Made Easy, Host of Yum Asia Cooking Show on Studio 23 and Yum Asia Cooking Show on Channel 2. Learn how to bake delicious cakes, pastries and breads in the comfort of your own home. P5,000

CLASS II – Thursday (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) classes on BASIC CUISINE by Chef Jane Penales. P5,000

CLASS III – Friday (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) classes on SAUCES & TEA CLASS by Chef Jane Penales. Food Consultant, Author of The Filipino Cookbook Recipes Made Easy, Host of Yum Asia Cooking Show on Studio 23 and Yum Asia Cooking Show on Channel 2. Learn how to make delicious sauces and tea in the comfort of your own home. P5,000

CLASS IV – Saturday (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) classes on BASIC BAKING & WORKSHOP by Chef Jo Enriquez. P5,000

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CLASS XIX – Saturday (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) classes on BASIC BAKING, PASTRY & WORKSHOP by Chef Jo Enriquez. P5,000

CLASS XX – Saturday (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) classes on BASIC BAKING, PASTRY & WORKSHOP by Chef Jo Enriquez. P5,000

THE CONSUMER

Abercrbie
Rebecca Gloria

Those red envelopes are back

MCDONALD'S KICKS OFF THE START of the ling and marks to 25th anniversary with discounts and freebies on your favorites with the McGreencard's ling Fun.

The traditional Chinese lucky red envelope, ang bao, romantic eight special coupons that may be used to get discounts on Chicken McGo, Burger McGo, McDiguilt's, Big Mac, McChicken and Big Breakfast meals.

Coupons will also entitle holders to free Coke option and Sweet-o-ville.

The McDonald's Ang Pao coupons are valid for dine-in, takeout, drive-thru and Oct 8-McGo delivery until March 15.

McDonald's, the world's No. 1 fast-food chain, is celebrating its 25th year of providing high-quality products at good value to Filipinos.

BOXED TREATS
Start this new year right! Treat family and friends. In the new Dessert 'n Dumplings Siopao Box at 64. Each box contains six mini buns in three varieties: Asado, Bola-bola and Chicken-Mushroom 'n Dumplings! Siopao Box of 6 is available in over 72 branches nationwide. Call 721-7695 to 98 or e-mail dnd@manila.com.

The kitchen as classroom

THE JULIUS MAGGI KITCHEN WILL hold a "Cooklitz for Two" demo and a lecture on table etiquette and table setting will also be held.

The demo will be held 2-5 p.m. Jan. 10, 11, 16 and 26, and 9 a.m.–12 noon, on Jan. 21 and 28, at Julius Maggi Kitchen, G/F North Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Call 7282181 or 7234420.

Cooklitz for Two is a cooking-demo line of the two series of paying classes dubbed Fruit Pasta on Jan. 28, 2-4 p.m. For only P350, learn how to make spaghetti, fettuccine, linguine and angel hair from scratch, and its matching traditional sauces.

Model club members who bring along friends who are not yet members may win exciting prizes in the Member-Get-Member Promo. If they see their co-actor with the most number of invitees.

Japanese food toppings

The Reggie Aquino School of Culinary Arts will conduct the following classes:

Jan. 20 Brules—Whole Mayonnaise Barbecued Rub of Tender Beef Brisket with oil-barbecue sauce, salad, side dishes and dessert.

Jan. 21 Japanese Rice Toppings—Beef Teriyaki Bowl, Tempuraliciz, Omelet Don, Unagi, Katsu Curry and Tori Xomi (Japanese-style Chicken Bicolo).

Jan. 23 Americas—The New Chili con Carne, Texas-Style Barbecued Beef Brisket with Jambalaya, Shrimp Creole with Dirty Rice and Southern Fried Chicken.

Jan. 29: My Favorite Pasta from Way Back—Pasta with Scallops and Sun-dried Tomatoes, Pasta with Basil, Tops, Shrimps and Mushrooms and Crab Pasta Stuffed.

Call 9289296, 9273888, 8333142, 4474744, 8917-3309988.

Free choco demo

A demonstration on chocolate pralline making will be held 12 noon-2 p.m., Jan. 21 by students of the School of Food, Restaurant and Institutional Management, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, in Bakery World 2006 International Expo of Equipment & Supplies for the Bakery and Catering Industries) at the World Trade Center.

Here on its second year, Bakery World 2006 will be held Jan. 19-21, Held simultaneously are Sweets and Snacks Expo '06, the Restaurant and food ingredients fair, and Catering Expo 2006.

Call DLS-CSB School of Food, Restaurant and Institution Management at 4007404 or www.bakeryworldexpo.com.

Mooaya cooking

Food enthusiast Sunny de la Cuesta will hold a Mooaya cooking demonstration on Jan. 24, 1:30-4:30 p.m., at the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, Legaspi cor. Lapu-lapu Streets, Barrio Espeig, Pasig City.

The session, "Appreciating Mooaya Cuisine," will discuss the distinctive cooking that originated in Penang and Singapore. Mooaya is a marriage of Malay and Chinese cooking styles and characterized by sweet, sour and pungent flavors.

Fee is P800 per participant. Call 4171975 local 402, 2771, 404 and 405. Early reservation and payment is required. Limited slots available. Visit www.mooayafood.com.

Starting a food business

SEBAC's Proactive southern Mayang ng a Restaurant/Canteen Seminar-Workshop on Jan. 23-27, 9-5 p.m.

The five-day training will cover such topics as planning the concept, menu, location, layout and equipment, staffing, food safety and sanitation, resource development, and cost control, among others.

Reservations are on a first come, first-served basis. Call 8211503 or 8911-6033/35. Seminar fee is P5,000 per participant, inclusive of manual and handouts, certificate of completion, and workshop materials and equipment.

Feedback from foodies . . .

From page B4

have decided to have lechon right away. Their next question was where is order. Few weeks even forwarded us her message to relatives to contact my suggestions. I hope they're not disappointed.

Lechon reviewers a-dim not easy to get as, if available, it's usually not up to par with what we can get here. New York resident Perdie Fernandez frowned, scanty of the 2003 Dessert contest forwarded. Food PR Dina Bersal had Filipino food for her Kuche Bunny pastry lumpia, ham-, plus lechon that disappointed because the skin wasn't crisp. I did suggest that placing the lechon back into the oven will make the skin crisp again, something to be tried the next big event that have chicken-based meals.

We've also noted that Cendrillon, a restaurant in New York owned by Filipino couple Betty and Amy Chavacas, had a posh menu of 12 courses last November. Unfortunately, there was no Filipino food served.

Those were just some of the e-mails sent in response to the past columns. Many asked for restaurant recommendations. One described his family coming in from the United States as "savvy Californians who don't cringe on anchovy and dark soy-ness." Indeed, I responded to each request but that included a warning that I can't be responsible for quality that has deteriorated when I was last there.

E-mail me at josephcd04@yahoo.com.

5-day mall fair on culinary trends

MSG cubes are preserved in a microscopic way to make the food more appealing.

THE COUNTRY'S TOP FOOD EXPERTS WILL share the latest information in Culinary Trends 2006 on Jan. 24-28 at SM Southmall activity center.

A project of the Le Cordon Bleu Manille (LCBM) Arts Management Association of the Philippines, with support from SM Southmall and the Culinary Art Foundation of the Philippines, the fair aims to promote Philippine cuisine internationally.

Hotel and Restaurant Management students, budding entrepreneurs, cooking aficionados, homemakers and hobbyists are invited to join in the activity free of charge.

The centerpiece of the event is the Culinary Theater, a mobile classroom that aims to promote culinary education developed for the non-pros.

Big food establishments, top culinary personalities and master chefs will be participating in the Culinary Theater's five-day run. Chef Billy King will give a lecture about the food industry and discuss the Food Trends for 2006 on Jan. 24; Imelda Silverio, kitchen design consultant, will discuss the latest kitchen designs and equipment on Jan. 26, while Dr Conchita Dayrit, virgin coconut oil researcher, will talk about the product and how it helps our body on Jan. 28.

The Culinary Theater will also showcase a food theater featuring different dishes from some of Manila's top restaurants, as well as a speed skills demo by some of the students of Le Cordon Bleu Manille. Other events to look out for are the Food Bazaar and Farming Frisbee Cream Tasting Event.

Le Cordon Bleu Manille started more than 20 years ago when Pat Limjoco Dayrit became the first Filipino to receive the prestigious Grand Diplome in the legendary French school Le Cordon Bleu. Upon her return in 1940, she opened a culinary training center for young homemakers and food technicians, calling it Le Cordon Bleu Manille.

Since that time, LCBM has educated thousands and graduated many of the country's top chefs and entrepreneurs.

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Latest indie rockers alternative band on Sony presents their third album "Introverted" under Sony BMG records.

myband

LE CORDON Bleu Manille's students doing their cooking demonstrations

Perfect Paella

Turn to page A11

Millo, author of Gastronomia dels Universitat Valenciana, Legislatura Alimentaria Española and La Paella. Soler argued:

"Accepting that paella, the Spanish national dish, is the subject of furious controversy and disparate points of view that may never be resolved insofar as ingredients and methods are concerned, our paella adheres to what is considered the most orthodox, traditional and classical reference as championed by the best authorities in Spanish cuisine.

"Following these advocates and in line with the priorities among paella purists, paella is devoid of any tomato sauce or tomato paste. Only a minuscule amount (one small piece for 10 servings) of fresh tomatoes, peeled, pitted and minced, are introduced, and this only in the initial sautéing to balance the sacred's acidity."

Soler insisted the base of paella should only be oil (not necessarily but preferably olive oil) enhanced by saffron and the flavors of all the other ingredients which have been previously fried or sautéed therein.

While he would not share how he cooks his paella, he stresses that rice is its fundamental ingredient and that this is introduced dry into the oil so that it will have maximum absorbency to soak in the flavors that the oil has previously imbibed from the different ingredients. Water is introduced after...so let the rice cook properly.

"We know it's a great paella when you can taste all its flavors in one grain of rice," he said.

Tomatoes or no tomatoes, to agree or disagree, that is entirely up to you. One thing I must admit, though—it sure was a terrific evening capped with a graciously meted glass of Licor de Crema Catalana (Cream Liqueur, a take-off from the famous dessert Crema Catalana, a light hybrid between crème brûlée and leche flan. Someone came up with the idea that the dessert could be turned into a liqueur and he was right. Woohoo! (more!)

Tito Rick, for a person, you're a joy to have around and spending time with you is personal bliss as well as great opportunity for me to learn, discuss and even disagree. You are truly one ingredient that makes life, healthy and wonderfully wealthy!

For reservations, franchise or deliveries call 5362962, 840 1565, 09 17-5217500 or email reinadacera@gmail.com.

E-mail the author at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

DINING nook at Reiz Subores

POSTNOT

BY BILL MINEO

A LITPIX

BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY RIA JUNIOR

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

HUTTS

BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PAMILIAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly creative. Whatever results you benefit first. Because of this, people admire you. You excel at self-advancement and practical ideas suggested people to you. Consequently, you have a lot of power and influence. Exciting new beginnings are possible for you. Keep an open mind. Be ready to adapt to other directions.

Birthdate of: Dolly Parton, singer/actress; Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee; Jack Ingles, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You are ready for action. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. People tend to go with the flow! Enjoy good times with friends, clubs, organizations and professional associations.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today you can make a strong impression on others. Talks, classes, property and business matters go very well. Be open to new ideas. Others will be receptive to you. It's like a spotlight on you!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today you can make a strong impression on others. This is a lovely holiday for the arts. Romance, children, entertainment, study and creative pursuits. Getting into the hustle will cross your way.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's time to be more active. Talks, classes, property and business matters. Be open to new ideas. Others will be receptive to you. It's like a spotlight on you!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today you can make a strong impression on others. This is a lovely holiday for the arts. Romance, children, entertainment, study and creative pursuits. Getting into the hustle will cross your way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next few days, you'll be focused on get organized tasks at home and at work. For whatever reason, you have it's time to pull your act together so that you can take it to the next.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): When a new idea, project or opportunity sounds ahead you have to look forward to! This is a wonderful time to go on vacation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You can expect to deal with home, family and real estate matters more than usual now. Perhaps a project will be in your life soon that's unusual.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): In the next few days, you'll be busy meeting people, making plans and socializing. Taking and making time for fun and socializing, and studying, writing and studying time, that's you!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): As the sun changes signs today, it brings a new cycle into your life. For some, you are a loving lover you spend your money on, and what you really get in return. Something to think about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today the sun changes signs and for the next few weeks. You should be very sure to exchange your business for the rest of the year.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You exercise by how you take it easy. Work slower or behind the scenes if you can. This is a time of quiet preparation, reflection and relaxation.

DAILY CROSSWORD

HUMOR ME

BY DAN THOMPSON

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE

BY HANS ABRERA

LOVEBUGS

BY ELIZABETH CHONG-LO

TULDOK

BY RAFLAND 'BITUIN' MUAMBUENG

IN A BOWL, combine egg whites, dried scallops and fish. Mix well.

HEAT oil and pour the egg white mixture, stirring continuously with a whisk to keep it from coagulating. Stir till it's 70 percent cooked.

STRAIN and set aside.

IN ANOTHER pan, heat 1 tbsp oil. Add ginger, chicken stock, wine, salt, chicken powder, sugar and cornstarch. Stir well to thicken the mixture. Then add the egg white mixture. Transfer into a platter.

Something so right and light after the holidays

TOP with raw egg yolk.

SERVE Scrambled Egg White with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop with black vinegar and minced ginger

Text by Margot Bago-Reyes
Photos by Roger Canjas

A FEW the big meals and rich treats during the holiday season, don't you just want to eat something light yet tasty and easy-to-do at home?

Scrambled Egg Whites with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop is one dish we can suggest. This Chinese recipe is easy to prepare and requires only a few ingredients, mainly egg whites.

In Chinese cooking, eggs are used quite often like in make rice noodles, to add flavor and texture or, as in this recipe, to make dried ingredients a meal in itself.

Scrambled Egg Whites with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop has a luxuriously rich texture, but is quite low in calories.

Dried scallop and shredded fish fillet are added primarily to enhance the flavor of this egg dish. The fillet can be sole or tapa style.

When mixed and eaten with Chinese black vinegar, the egg dish surprisingly acquires a taste that is almost similar to crab meat. "It can also steam for seafood, this dish does the trick," says Jacqueline Lee, Peking Garden dining manager.

"You can set scrambled egg as is, if you want it plain and simple, but if you long for lobster meat or crab meat, simply mix in the black vinegar with minced ginger," says Lee.

Black vinegar is a dark complex vinegar made of glutinous rice and malt. It is somewhat similar to a balsamic used in Chinese stir-fries, braises and sauces. Black vinegar is available in most Chinese stores and some supermarkets.

STEP BY STEP

Scrambled Egg Whites with Minced Fish and Dried Scallop is one of the favorites at Peking Garden, 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City. Tel. 8179866/817-1860. Peking Garden is an affiliate of Mandarin Hong Kong.

- 300 g (if pre) egg whites
- 60 g shredded fish (solo fillet)
- 30 dried scallops
- 60 g chicken soup stock
- 4 pinch of minced ginger, salt, sugar
- 1 tsp chicken powder
- 1 tbsp cornstarch dissolved in 3 tsp water
- 2 tsp Chinese yellow wine (Shaoxing)
- ½ tsp sesame oil
- ½ cup
- Chinese black vinegar

For suggestions, e-mail the author at stopfoodinquirer.com.ph

Heart-friendly pizzas

DINING OUT

SALAD BOWL PIZZA KITCHEN (CPE) is one of Serving dishes that are 99 percent free of trans fat, which can contribute to heart problems. CPK serves only heart-friendly oils like canola, sesame and extra-virgin olive oil. CPK has over 35 gourmet pizzas and 17 pastas. In addition to appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts. It has locations in Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati Circle de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center, 2/F, Bridgeway, Shangri-La Mall, and Bellagio Square, Bonifacio Global City. For more CPK quick-service restaurant locations, call Promenade Cosmetics.

JAPAN X GRILL offers such mixed Filipino-food destinations are unique in its way, plus. These who want to healthy can choose from several grilled dishes. The restaurant sizes with the Yoshimi seafood. Prices are reasonable. Seafood dishes cost P130-P300, while combos do not exceed P400 each. Mango Tsuyu for dessert costs P80. Japan X Grill is also a nice ideal venue for get-togethers of families, friends or colleagues. The restaurant caters to all tastes. Japan X Grill is at Rockwell Center, Makati City. Tel. 8810-1868/8810-1141.

MAKATI CHINESE LEE Chang Palace offers a special & tasteful menu in celebration of the Chinese New Year. The menu consists of soup, dim sum and specialties like braised pork Tonkin with black mushrooms and vegetables, salmon steak with Ginger and Scallions Ika Clay Pot, Combination of Crispy Milk and Spicy Salt Calamares, among others. Call 8-555888 or 8-126888 local 1688 or 1690. The classic Chinese dining will be available at the hotel's main lobby until Jan. 29. For more details of this promo, call 8-555888.

MAKATI CHINESE LEE offers South Beach Grilled Specialties and Smoothies with no added refined sugar for a filling, satisfying delight that tastes of memories. Inside a South Beach Grilled Specialty include Herb-Crusted Pork Chop, Southwestern Spicy Pork Chop, Classic Pork Chop and Cajun Smoked Chicken—all served with organic Mozzarella cheese mix. Drinks include What's Up Doc, a blend of carrots, orange and banana while Pink Me! is combines pineapple, lime and banana. Orange and pineapple make up Caribbean while papaya, peach and pineapple are used in Papa Don't Peach. Other Favorite Smoothies are Very Berry Good, Strawberry Sweet and Mangoes. Acacia Smoothie Cafe is on Forbes Mezzo Avenue, Chipeth in Eastwood, Libis, Festive Store in Robinsons Galleria Podium, Greenhills Promenade, Greenbelt 3, and soon, Mall of Asia.

MAKATI CHINESE LEE offers Delicious Enchiladas—corn fresh tortillas with choice fillings of beef or chicken smothered in Ranchero sauce, served with Mexican rice, and topped with cheese and sour cream.

CPK's original BBQ Chicken Chopped has chopped lettuce, black beans, sweet corn, jicama, cilantro, basil, crispy corn tortilla chips and Monterey Jack cheese tossed together in our barbecue dressing. Topped with chopped BBQ chicken breast, diced tomatoes and scallions.

PAPA PIZZA Cool Pick-a-tch Fannie Boat Native Snacks, Mumbai-to-Brunei's Fly Hua offers "The Best of Beijing" Jan. 26-Feb. 12, prepared by guest chefs Pang Tao Andy and Ha Meng Hint.

LITTLE ASIA has opened a branch on 2/F, The Promenade, Greenhills. The restaurant has new dishes like Hamanaka Crispy Chicken Wings with Garlic and Watercress Beef Cubes with Tomatoes. Bestsellers include Salt and Pepper Frog Legs, Sizzling Baby Tahres Prawns with Caramelized Rice, Thai Chicken Barbecue, Deep-fried Chicken and Crispy Chicken. Desserts include Caramel Mango Flower and Crispy Banana Ice. Little Asia is at Tomas Morato cor. Scout Fontabella Streets in Quezon City, call 373-8689 and 410-9937, and 2/L, The Promenade, Greenhills, call 727-0365 and 721-5182.

Feedback from foodies and homesick Pinoys

MAYBE MY EMAIL ADDRESS AVAILABLE to all readers exposes me to spammers. But that's outbalanced when there are responses from readers who inform me about (1) what they ate, (2) what they want to eat, (3) where to get the best food and drink.

Perking from Kyoto, Japan, Vincent Tayo recollection is needed all the way in Zimbabwe.

COUNTRY COOKING

Alicia Ayala

go City to tell me of the best eats he has tasted.

Was he sure you've met about in your neck-in-the-sea, angry-sun with little chicks of low-beyond meat? If it is, a Johnnie friend told me that the best eats (at least the ones told in Manila restaurants or huddles) can now be found in Zimbabwe (!!). The good info

PUSO member in Cebu posing by her mobile shop

rocks in Kotwildn't want to go back even after the flight leg in the island province to the 70% subsided. When I went to Jolo about two years ago, I tried my bit until as we call it in Zamboanga in a whisker, and I have to admit, the one in Zamboanga are indeed better. I recommend **Rainbow Restaurants**. The place isn't much to look at but the one tastes great, and I assure you, you'll never your hand off."

Sir, Vincent, the one in the soupy red one. My guides in Zamboanga brought me to Morning Glory, to natural (probably because it's only open in the morning. I was advised not to wear white because if that red sauce splatters, it's goodbye to your whites. The sate or sate are super-tyler slices skewered on coconut saddles, the handheld pair resting on the edge of the not more soup bowl. Dozens (raw cooked in boat-shaped woven coconut leaves) is included in each order. One is supposed to place some of the juice into the sauce, have one piece of the sate and then take it with a piece of the juice-soaked out of the red sauce.

But, sir, I will try Rainbow Restaurants next time.

Local wine

For the place no local wines, there were many inquiries on either in my inbox. Their sources in to expensive things but Pandoo Corporation sent. In e-mail and contact numbers: pmorgenes@info.com.ph, (02)5 5466700, (02) 8257398.

Robert Allana forgot the name of a wine from La Union (still, a painting or illustration on its label, though he hasn't (but it's from Republica.

I haven't seen that wine but when we were at the Magallanes bar/stakes, our food host group joked that in case we marketed the best, it would be called Chateau Lizay after the town in Pangasinan. Maybe someone found it and decided to appropriate the name.

Ismael Dalmasa wrote about how I missed out on the fruit wines of the Cordilleras, particularly of Baguio, Mountain Province. He did say that he's a dealer for his uncle who produces those wines. Ironically it "Salcosa" and recommend the available flavors. There to discuss, though he didn't say exactly what the local name for the fruit is. There is logroup, which is how Agency is called in the Cordilleras, and he explained that it's a valid. berry and "a favorite with tourists." There is vanilla that is made from cacao. Apart from the fruit wines, he also provides the Cordillera rice wine, tapuy.

I texted the number he provided and was told to call a landline and look for Isidro. Turned out to be Dalmasan's mother, who told me how her son decided to help promote the local wines of Bauko. She told the wines have a flavor of Food and 20 mg excitation. And that apart from those her son mentioned, lemon and persimmon wines are also available.

A 750-ml bottle is sold for P371. For three bottles, the discounted price is P500. Call 09152259 and 09151-4025946, or e-mail dalmas2003@yahoo.com.

Missing 'lechon'

The piece on lechon spurred Bob Ortega to e-mail me about the best lechon ever his hometown. He claims it's better than even all the other lechon he has tried throughout the country. He suggests checking out Hunter's lechon to visit 7 rish Ulanski City, Mountain Province. He doesn't mind that it takes him an hour to travel from his house to buy the lechon in the city.

Reading about lechon made some overseas Filipinos homesick. Alex Tamayo, who resides in Maine, USA, wrote this statelive: "When you are on overtime (about 7 p.m.), an hod reads your desk and you see in a hungry hand!... you cannot say, 'I will try it when I get home tonight.' 'I take home dead!!!'

Those who will be home to for new months

FEEDBACK TO

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2. Cardholder of PNB/Visa Platinum Credit Card and other Visa cardholder is eligible for the Visa promotion for customer to secure (1) of every 2 Visa transactions in Hong Kong Disneyland on March 1 to 31, 2006. Must check with cashier manager.

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2. Call Center: Metro Manila - (632) 7368 Provincial - Toll Free # (800) 1888-7368
3. Website: www.hkdisneyland.com/visa

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Ang taong happy, yung may energy.

Michael V. naka-Enervon araw-araw

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